

Session 28: Holy Week

HYMN: When I Survey the Wondrous
Cross



When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God.
All worthless things that charm me
most —
I sacrifice them to His Blood.

See, from His head, His hands, His
feet,
how pain and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were all the realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

PRAYER:

Let us pray:

O God, Who,
through Your Word
reconcile the human race to Yourself
in a wonderful way,
grant, we pray,
that with prompt devotion
and eager faith,
the Christian people may hasten
toward the solemn celebrations
to come.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ,
Your Son,
Who lives and reigns with You
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

— Amen

READING: Is 52:13-15, 53:3-11

A Reading from the Book of the
Prophet Isaiah
See, my Servant shall prosper;

He shall be raised high
and greatly exalted.

Even as many were amazed at Him —
so marred was His look
beyond that of man,
and His appearance
beyond that of mortals —
so shall He startle many nations;
because of Him,
kings shall stand speechless.

He was spurned and avoided by men,
a Man of suffering,
accustomed to infirmity,
one of those
from whom men hide their faces,
spurned;
and we held Him in no esteem.

Yet it was our infirmities
that He bore,
our sufferings
that He endured,
while we thought of Him as stricken,
as one smitten by God and afflicted.

But He was pierced
for our offences,
crushed for our sins.
Upon Him was the chastisement
that makes us whole;
by His stripes we were healed.

We had all gone astray like sheep,
each following his own way,
but the Lord laid upon Him
the guilt of us all.

Though He was harshly treated,
He submitted
and opened not His mouth.
Like a lamb led to the slaughter
or a sheep before the shearers,
He was silent
and opened not His mouth.

Oppressed and condemned,
He was taken away,
and who would have thought
any more of His destiny?

When He was cut off
from the land of the living,
and smitten
for the sin of His people,
a grave was assigned Him
among the wicked
and a burial place
with evildoers,
though he had done no wrong
nor spoken any falsehood. —

If He gives His life
as an offering for sin,
He shall see His descendants
in a long life,
and the will of the Lord
shall be accomplished through Him.

Because of His affliction,
He shall see the light
in fullness of days.
Through His suffering,
My Servant shall justify many,
and their guilt He shall bear.
The Word of the Lord
— *Thanks be to God*

IN BRIEF: WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem
manifested the coming of the Kingdom
that the King-Messiah
was going to accomplish
by the Passover
of His death and Resurrection.

It is with the celebration
of that entry on Palm Sunday
that the Church's liturgy
solemnly opens Holy Week.

Although Jesus had always refused
popular attempts to make Him king,
He chose the time
and prepared the details
for His messianic entry
into the city of "His father David."

The people's acclamation,
"Blessed be He
Who comes in the name of the Lord,"
is taken up by the Church
in the Eucharistic liturgy,
as she introduces the memorial
of the Lord's Passover.

By celebrating the Last Supper
with His apostles
in the course of the Passover meal,
Jesus gave the Jewish Passover
its definitive meaning.

His passing over to His Father
by His death and Resurrection —
the new Passover —
is anticipated in the Supper
and celebrated in the Eucharist,
which fulfils the Jewish Passover
and anticipates
the final Passover of the Church
in the glory of the Kingdom.

The Lord,

having loved those who were His own,
loved them to the end.
Knowing that the hour had come
for Him to leave this world
and return to the Father,
in the course of a meal,
He washed their feet
and gave them
the commandment of love.

In order to leave them
a pledge of this love —
in order never to depart
from His own
and to make them sharers
in His Passover —
He instituted the Eucharist
as the memorial
of His death and Resurrection,
and commanded His apostles
to celebrate it until His return;
thereby He constituted them priests
of the New Testament.

BIBLE READING

Mk 9:2-16

This week,
you will read how a man
brought his son to Jesus
to be cured.

"I do believe!"
he assured Jesus.
"Help my lack of trust!"

Belief, or faith,
and trust, often called "hope,"
are two examples of "Virtue,"
which we will talk about
next week.

Holy Week

Introduction

The events of the last week before Jesus died accomplished our salvation¹ — once, and for all. However, their power continues to reach us in the Church's liturgy, which *re-presents* them to us, making them *present for us* and us *present at the events*.² Starting with Palm (or "Passion") Sunday and including the *Sacred Triduum*³ — Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday — this week is the core of the Church's liturgical year.

The accounts of those events occupy roughly one third of the Gospels. If we are familiar with them, we experience more fully the "amazement" that is "essential" to our celebration of the liturgy; not a vague "sense of mystery" that overcomes us "in the face of an obscure reality or a mysterious rite," but an appreciation of "the power of symbol," which makes liturgy concrete.

Liturgy is accomplished with "things," not just "spiritual abstractions, but bread, wine, oil, water, fragrances, fire, ashes, rock, fabrics, colours, body, words, sounds, silences, gestures, space, movement, action, order, time, [and] light." If we have "become illiterate, no longer able to read symbols," it is time for us to become "capable" of appreciating them once again.⁴

Accordingly, in this talk, we will combine the Gospel accounts of what Jesus did during that first Holy Week with what the Church does in her Holy Week liturgy, which is the "today" of that history.⁵

The timeline

Jesus "freely accepted"⁶ His passion and death. "I lay down My life to take it up again," He said. "No one takes it from Me; I lay it down freely."⁷ He did not *succumb* to the events of Holy Week, but *accomplished* them in the "sovereign freedom of God's Son,"⁸ and He and His Father decided when it was time.⁹

"In Christianity time has a fundamental importance.... In Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, time becomes a dimension of God, Who is Himself eternal." Christ is "the Lord of time," its "beginning and its end."¹⁰

We see hints that Jesus had a "timeline" even before Holy Week. For example, when He first sent out His apostles, He told them to "go after the lost sheep of the House of Israel" and not to "visit pagan territory" or "enter a Samaritan town."¹¹ When a Canaanite woman asked Him to cure her daughter, He said that it was wrong "to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."¹² From all the nations, God had chosen the Israelites. Jesus, God the Son made Man, was a Jew.

On the other hand, God acted "with a view to healing the whole human race."¹³ Jesus "died for all men without exception."¹⁴ Just before His Ascension, He extended the apostles' mission to "all the nations."¹⁵

However, when Jesus met the Canaanite woman, *it was not yet time*. As He had told His mother at the wedding in Cana, His "hour" had "not yet come."¹⁶

In both cases, His petitioners' faith made Him "jump the gun," so to speak: He

1 See the talk on "The History of Our Salvation."

2 The liturgy is (in Hebrew) the *zikaron* or (in Greek) the *anamnesis* of these events; see the talk on "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice."

3 From the Latin *tre* ("three") plus *dies* ("day").

4 See Pope Francis: *Desiderio Desideravi*, 44.

5 See Pope Francis: *Desiderio Desideravi*, 2.

6 Eucharistic Prayer 2

7 Jn 10:17-18

8 See CCC 609; Jn 10:18.

9 See CCC 599, 600.

10 John Paul II: *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 10

11 Mt 10:5-6

12 See Mt 15:21-26; Mk 7:24-27.

13 Pope Benedict XVI: *Deus Caritas Est*, 9

14 CCC 605. "There is not, never has been, and never will be" a human being for whom Christ did not suffer.

15 Mt 28:19

healed the woman's daughter and changed water into wine. Nevertheless, He did not say "The hour has come" until He entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.¹⁷

Preparing for death

On the Fifth Sunday of Lent,¹⁸ the Gospel Reading at Mass recounts how Jesus brought Lazarus back to life when he had been dead and buried four days.¹⁹

The Jewish leaders had wanted to get rid of Jesus for some time,²⁰ but "His hour had not yet come."²¹ Now, however, after this miracle — His last — so many people "put their faith in Him" that the authorities formed a plan "to kill Him."²²

"In consequence," He "no longer moved about freely," but withdrew to Ephraim, 20 km northeast of Jerusalem, "where He stayed with His disciples."²³

Then, "six days before the Passover,"²⁴ He came back to Bethany, Lazarus' village, less than 3 km east of Jerusalem. Lazarus' sister Martha gave a banquet for Him, at which her sister Mary anointed His feet with "costly perfume" and Jesus accepted the anointing "against the day they prepare Me for burial."²⁵

He knew that his "hour" was approaching.

Palm Sunday

About 600 years before, Daniel, a young Jewish captive in Babylon,²⁶ had prophesied²⁷ that Judea would be subjected in turn to the Babylonians, the Persians,²⁸ the Greeks,²⁹ and the Romans,³⁰ and after that to "the God of Heaven." In 63 BC, Roman pro-consul Pompey had besieged Jerusalem and made Judea a tributary kingdom of the Roman Empire. In 6 AD, Judea had been incorporated into the Roman province of Iudaea, under direct Roman rule.³¹

By Jesus' time, therefore, the Jews expected the Messiah to come soon *to free them from Rome*. They knew that He would be a descendant of King David and therefore the hereditary King of Israel.³² Accordingly, those who believed that Jesus was the Messiah called Him "Son of David,"³³ while others wondered.³⁴

Now, aware that their leaders were trying to apprehend Him, they watched for Him as they came up to Jerusalem for the Passover, asking each other, "What do you think? Is He likely to come for the feast?"³⁵ The day after Martha's banquet, they heard that He was about to enter the city, so they went out to meet Him.³⁶

In the past, Jesus had avoided their attempts to make Him king,³⁷ but this time, as He neared Jerusalem — knowing that "the hour" had come³⁸ — He sent two

16 Jn 2:4. See Jn 7:30, 8:20.

17 See the talk on "The History of Our Salvation," Appendix.

18 See the talk on "The Church's Liturgical Year."

19 See Jn 11:1-44.

20 See Jn 5:18, 7:1,19,25, 8:37,40.

21 See Jn 7:6,30, 8:20.

22 See Jn 11:45-53.

23 Jn 11:54. This withdrawal might explain the Church's practice of veiling images with purple cloth (except the Stations of the Cross or stained glass windows) for two weeks before Easter. Another explanation is the medieval custom, noted in Germany from the ninth century, of hiding the altar with a large cloth from Ash Wednesday until the Gospel on Holy Wednesday, at the words "the curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two." (Before Vatican II, all the Gospel accounts of Christ's passion were read during Holy Week.) That custom, in turn, may come from the ancient ritual expulsion of penitents from the church during Lent.

24 Jn 12:1

25 See Jn 12:3-7; Mt 26:13; Mk 14:8.

26 See *The Book of Daniel*, "Introduction."

27 See Dn 2:31-45.

28 The Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 BC.

29 The Greeks defeated the Persians at the sea Battle of Salamis in 480 BC.

30 The Romans defeated the Greeks at the Battle of Corinth in 146 BC.

31 See Brant Pitre: *The Case for Jesus*, 8.

32 See the talk on "The History of Our Salvation."

33 See 2 Sm 7:16; Is 7:13-14, 11:1-9; Mt 9:27, 15:22, 20:30-31, 21:9; Mk 10:47-48; Lk 18:38-39.

34 See Mt 12:23.

35 See Jn 11:55-57.

36 See Jn 12:12-13.

37 See Jn 6:15.

38 See Jn 12:23.

disciples to bring Him an ass and her colt. They "laid their cloaks on them, and He mounted," and so entered Jerusalem,³⁹ Judea's capital.

Thus He fulfilled a well known prophecy:⁴⁰ "Shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your King shall come to you; a just Saviour is He, meek, and riding on an ass, on a colt, the foal of an ass. He shall banish the chariot from Ephraim and the horse," used by the Romans, symbol of a conqueror,⁴¹ "from Jerusalem."

Accordingly, a "huge crowd" welcomed Him *as their King*, spreading their cloaks on the road, cutting branches from the trees and laying them along His path,⁴² and calling "Hosanna⁴³ to the Son of David!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!"⁴⁴

And Jesus accepted this title. When the Jewish leaders asked, "Do you hear what they are saying?" He replied, "Of course I do! Did you never read this:⁴⁵ 'From the speech of infants and children You have framed a hymn of praise?'"⁴⁶ Then He "went out of the city," back to Bethany, "where He spent the night."⁴⁷

On Palm Sunday, the priest wears red, not purple. Before Mass, he blesses palm branches, which we take home, fold into crosses, and keep as sacramentals.⁴⁸ They are burned the following Ash Wednesday and the ashes used to mark our foreheads.

On Palm Sunday, we hear the "long Gospel," the story of Christ's arrest, torture, and death: in Year A,⁴⁹ by Matthew;⁵⁰ B, Mark;⁵¹ and C, Luke.⁵²

New temple

During the next few days — Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday — Jesus came back to Jerusalem and taught in the temple area.⁵³ "Coming within sight of the city" as He returned to it from Bethany, "He wept over it," prophesying its destruction because its people had "failed to recognize" Him.⁵⁴

Then He entered the temple and ejected the traders, driving out the animals and knocking over the money-changers' tables, quoting, "My house is meant for a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves."⁵⁵

When the Jewish authorities demanded a sign to back up His actions, He replied, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."⁵⁶ (They did not realize that "He was talking about the temple of His Body."⁵⁷)

Jesus' behaviour was not "just an angry outburst against the abuses" that occur in all holy places; the animals and the temple money had a "legitimate part" in the temple worship. Fundamentally, this was *an attack on the temple worship itself*,⁵⁸ and that is how the Jewish leaders saw it. Accordingly, at Jesus' trial, they accused Him of plotting to replace the temple with one "not made by human hands."⁵⁹

39 See Jn 12:14-15, 21:1-6; Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11:1-7; Lk 19:28-35.

40 Zec 9:9-10; see Is 62:11.

41 See CCC 559; Ps 33:16-17; 2 Sm 24:1-17; and the numerous references to Pharaoh's army, chariots, horses, warriors, and charioteers in Ex 14.

42 See Jn 12:8; Mt 21:8; Mk 11:8; Lk 19:36.

43 The Hebrew *Hosiahanna* means literally "Do save!".

44 Jn 12:13; see Mt 21:9; Mk 11:9; Lk 19:38.

45 Ps 8:3; see Wis 10:21.

46 Mt 21:16; see Lk 19:39-40.

47 Mt 21:17; see Mk 11:11; Jn 12:36.

48 See the talk on "Grace and the Sacraments," Appendix.

49 See the talk on "The Liturgical Year."

50 Mt 26:14 - 27:66

51 Mk 14:1 - 15:47

52 Lk 22:14 - 23:56

53 See Lk 19:47-48, 21:37-38.

54 See Lk 19:41-44.

55 Lk 19:45; see Mt 21:12-14; Jn 2:14-16; Is 56:6-7; Jer 7:9-11.

56 See Jn 2:18-19.

57 See Jn 2:21.

58 See Joseph Ratzinger: *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Part One, 3.

59 See Mk 14:58; Mt 26:61. The accusation played "a central role" in the dispute about Him (see Joseph Ratzinger: *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Part One, 3). Similarly, they later charged Stephen with claiming that Jesus would destroy the holy place "and change the customs" of Moses (see Acts 6:13-14).

Anointing

On the first three days after Palm Sunday, Mass is celebrated as usual, but on Holy Thursday, the only morning Mass is the diocesan "Chrism Mass,"⁶⁰ at which priests renew their ordination promises⁶¹ and the bishop blesses the sacred oils: the Oil of Catechumens and the Oil of the Sick, which are pure oil,⁶² and Chrism, which also contains balsam, an aromatic resin.

The bishop breathes over the Chrism⁶³ to symbolize its sanctification by the Holy Spirit, while the other priests extend their hands toward it to signify their unity with him. Only the bishop can bless the Oil of Catechumens or consecrate Chrism,⁶⁴ but, if necessary, a priest may bless the Oil of the Sick for his own use. Each priest keeps his oils in a small vessel⁶⁵ called an *oil stock*, which has three sections.⁶⁶ In a church, the parish's oils are kept in a cabinet called an *ambry*.⁶⁷

Anointing is very ancient. Right after the Exodus, God told the Jews how to make "sacred anointing oil"⁶⁸ and how to use it.⁶⁹ They used oil to anoint the head of a guest,⁷⁰ beautify the body,⁷¹ prepare a corpse for burial,⁷² offer sacrifice⁷³ to God, and dedicate a memorial stone.⁷⁴

"To anoint" is to make sacred, to set apart for a special vocation: kings,⁷⁵ priests,⁷⁶ and prophets⁷⁷ were anointed. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me," Jesus said; "therefore, He has anointed Me."⁷⁸

Four of the seven Sacraments include a light smear of oil with the thumb on the recipient's forehead: the Oil of Catechumens in Baptism; the Oil of the Sick in the Sacrament of the Sick; and Chrism⁷⁹ in Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.⁸⁰ In dedicating a church, the bishop anoints the walls with Chrism in four or twelve places, marked by crosses; in dedicating the altar, he pours Chrism over it.

Anointing, therefore, is part of our religious life from our Baptism until "the moment when we prepare to meet God, our Judge and Saviour."⁸¹

The new Passover

Now Jesus looked forward to Friday, 14 Nisan, when the paschal lambs would be sacrificed.⁸² "You know that in two days' time it will be Passover," He told His apostles, "and the Son of Man is to be handed over to be crucified."⁸³ Accordingly, He sent off Peter and John to "go and prepare" their "Passover supper."⁸⁴

The *Pasch* had taken place in Egypt, where the Jews were slaves,⁸⁵ about 1446 BC. God had told each Jewish household to take an unblemished male lamb

60 In the Vancouver Archdiocese, usually celebrated in Holy Rosary Cathedral at 5:00 pm on Holy Wednesday.

61 Including obedience to the bishop.

62 Traditionally, olive oil, but other vegetable oils may be used (see *Code of Canon Law*, 847).

63 Jesus Himself "breathed" on His apostles and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn 20:22).

64 See *Code of Canon Law*, 847, 999.

65 Small enough to fit in a pocket.

66 Labelled OC or OS (*Oleum Catechumenorum* or *Oleum Sanctorum*, "Oil of Catechumens" or "Holy Oil"), OI (*Oleum Infirmorum*, "Oil of the Sick"), and SC (*Sacrum Chrisma*, "Holy Chrism").

67 From the Latin *armarium* ("chest" or "safe"). It may be labelled OS (*Olea Sacra*, "Sacred Oils").

68 From olive oil, myrrh, cinnamon, fragrant cane, and cassia (see Ex 30:23-25).

69 See Ex 30:26-30.

70 See Lk 7:46.

71 See Ru 3:3.

72 See Mk 16:1.

73 See Ex 29:40.

74 See Gn 28:18.

75 See 1 Sm 16:1-2, 12-13. European kings are still anointed when they are crowned, including British kings.

76 See Ex 28:41, 29:7, 30:30; Lv 8:12.

77 See 1 Kgs 19:16.

78 Lk 4:18; see Is 61:1. "Christ" comes from the Greek *Christos*, which means "anointed" (see CCC 438). The Hebrew *Mesiah*, anglicized as "Messiah," means "anointed." See Ps 23:5, 45:8, 133:1-2.

79 From the Greek *chrisma* ("anointing").

80 However, when Archbishop Adam Exner OMI of Vancouver ordained Bishop David Monroe of Kamloops January 5 2010, he warned him that he was going to *pour* oil on his head — and rub it in!

81 Pope Benedict XVI: Homily during the Chrism Mass April 1 2010

82 See Lk 22:7.

83 Mt 26:2; see Mk 14:1.

84 See Lk 22:7-13; Mt 26:17-19; Mk 14:12-16; CCC 1339-1340.

or kid; slaughter it at twilight on 14 Nisan; drain its blood;⁸⁵ roast it whole, without breaking its bones; eat it; and sprinkle its blood on the doorposts and lintel of the house.⁸⁷ That blood had saved the Jews when God had passed over the land and killed all the Egyptians' first-born.⁸⁸ From then on, at God's command, the Jews had commemorated the *Pasch*, or Passover, annually.⁸⁹

That year, 14 Nisan was a Friday; 15 Nisan, when the people ate the Passover meal, a Saturday. However, Jesus ate His Last Supper on 13 Nisan, a Thursday. "When the hour arrived," He "took His place at table" with the apostles and said, "I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."⁹⁰

It could not be the Passover meal as ritually prescribed,⁹¹ for Jesus knew that by Saturday, He would have died. It was the new Passover, accomplished in the context of the old — not abolishing the old, but bringing it "to its full meaning."⁹²

Two Sacraments

At this Passover meal, Jesus instituted two Sacraments: the Holy Eucharist and Holy Orders.⁹³

He took bread, gave thanks,⁹⁴ broke it, and gave it to His apostles, saying, "This is My Body, given for you." Then He took a cup of wine mixed with water, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "All of you must drink from it, for this is My Blood, the Blood of the covenant, poured out in behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins."

By these words, He changed the bread and the wine *completely*⁹⁵ into His Body, given for us, and His Blood, shed for us. He showed us what He meant by giving His Body and shedding His Blood for us *on the cross* the next day.⁹⁶ What happened at the Last Supper and what happened on the cross *were the very same event* — His sacrifice of Himself to His Father for our salvation⁹⁷ — but on the cross it was "bloody,"⁹⁸ while at the Last Supper it was *sacramental*.

Then Jesus said, "Do this as a *remembrance* of Me."⁹⁹ By these words, He *ordained* His apostles priests,¹⁰⁰ giving them not only their *orders*, but also the *power* to do just what He had done: change bread and wine into His Body and Blood, offer Them in sacrifice to God the Father, and give Them to us to eat.

Holy Thursday liturgy

"The sacrifice of Christ and the sacrifice of the Eucharist are *one single sacrifice*." At Mass, "the same Christ Who offered Himself once in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross is contained and is offered in an unbloody manner,"¹⁰¹ just as at the Last Supper. Mass is a *zikaron* or *anamnesis* of what Jesus did: not merely a

85 See Ex 1:1-14.

86 See Gn 9:4.

87 See Ex 12:3-10, 21-22, 46.

88 See Ex 12-13.

89 See Ex 12:14-20, 24-27.

90 See Lk 22:14-16. Also see Pope Francis: *Desiderio Desideravi* ("I have desired with [great] desire").

91 See Ex 12:14-20, 24-27.

92 See Pope Benedict XVI: *Jesus of Nazareth, Part Two*, 5, 1; CCC 1334, 1340.

93 See Mt 26:17-29; Mk 14:12-25; Lk 22:7-20; 1 Cor 11:23-26; and the talk on "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice."

94 As the priest does in the Offertory of the Mass.

95 That is, He *transubstantiated* them.

96 "If we had not had the Last Supper — that is to say, if we had not had the ritual anticipation of his death — we would have never been able to grasp how the carrying out of His being condemned to death could have been in fact *the act* of perfect worship.... Only a few hours after the Supper, the apostles could have seen in the cross of Jesus, if they could have borne the weight of it, what it meant for Jesus to say, 'body offered,' 'blood poured out'" (Pope Francis: *Desiderio Desideravi*, 7).

97 "When Christ gives His Body and His Blood — gives Himself — then He is really giving up His life." His words at the Last Supper are "the inner act of the Cross" (Joseph Ratzinger: *God and the World*, Part II, 14, "INRI—The Passion of the Lord.")

98 CCC 1367

99 Lk 22:19; see 1 Cor 11:24-25.

100 See CCC 1337.

101 CCC 1367

"representation," but a *re-presentation*.¹⁰²

The Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday evening is especially joyful: the priest wears white or gold; there are flowers in the sanctuary; and we sing or say the *Gloria*¹⁰³ for the first time in Lent,¹⁰⁴ ringing bells for the first few bars.

What is about to happen on the altar is paramount, so the tabernacle is empty¹⁰⁵ and the sanctuary light, which indicates Jesus' presence, is out.

At His Last Supper, Jesus "picked up a towel and tied it around Himself. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet and dry them with the towel."¹⁰⁶ Later, He explained: "If I washed your feet — I who am 'Teacher' and 'Lord' — then you must wash each others' feet."¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, after the homily, the priest washes the feet of twelve parishioners.

At this Mass, the priest consecrates extra Hosts for the next day. Usually, we receive Christ's Body and Blood "under both species:" drinking His Blood from the chalice and eating His Body under the appearance of bread. At the end, the priest carries the Blessed Sacrament around the church in procession while (traditionally) the choir sings *Pange Lingua*,¹⁰⁸ describing Christ's institution of the Eucharist. Then he leaves the Host on the "Altar of Repose," outside the sanctuary.

After the Supper, Jesus "walked out to the Mount of Olives"¹⁰⁹ with His apostles, and here, in the Garden of Gethsemane,¹¹⁰ His agony began.

"My heart is nearly broken with sorrow," He said. "Remain here and stay awake with Me." When they fell asleep, He said, "So you could not stay awake with Me for even an hour?" Finally, He gave up. "Sleep on now. Enjoy your rest! The hour is come.... See, My betrayer is here."¹¹¹

At the end of the Mass, therefore, the Church's mood changes abruptly. Since the *Gloria*, the organ has been turned off, except as it is necessary to support the singing.¹¹² Now the flowers are removed, the altar stripped, the tabernacle left open, and the holy water removed from the fonts.

However, the Eucharist remains exposed for some hours before midnight for our adoration — for at least one hour, as Jesus begged.

He became sin

"On coming into the world," Jesus said to His Father, "Holocausts and sin offerings You took no delight in.... I have come to do Your will."¹¹³ Later, speaking about His death, He said, "This command I received from My Father."¹¹⁴

At His Incarnation,¹¹⁵ Jesus took on "the sin of the world";¹¹⁶ at His Baptism, He began His mission as God's suffering Servant;¹¹⁷ but it was when He gave us His Body and Blood as food¹¹⁸ — grafting us on to Him like infected branches on to a sound vine¹¹⁹ — that "God made Him Who did not know sin to be sin."¹²⁰

102 See the talk on "Mass" *Sacrament and Sacrifice*."

103 The prayer that begins "Glory to God in the highest."

104 Except for the Solemnities of St. Joseph (March 19) and sometimes the Annunciation (March 25).

105 See *Roman Missal: Thursday of the Lord's Supper, At the Evening Mass*, 5.

106 Jn 13:4-5

107 Jn 13:14

108 See the talk on "Mass: Sacrament and Sacrifice," Appendix 3.

109 See Mt 26:29-30.

110 See Mt 26:36; Jn 18:1-2.

111 See Mt 26:36-46; Mk 14:32-42. About 1553, to counteract the wild pre-Lenten *Carnivale* (the French *Mardi Gras*), St. Philip Neri organized visits to the seven basilicas of Rome: St. Peter's, St. Paul Outside-the-Walls, St. Sebastian's, St. John Lateran, Holy Cross-in-Jerusalem, St. Lawrence-Outside-the-Walls, and St. Mary Major. The practice spread and eventually became a Holy Thursday devotion.

112 See the *Roman Missal: The Sacred Paschal Triduum, Thursday of the Lord's Supper, At the Evening Mass*, 7.

113 Heb 10:6-7; see Ps 40:7-9.

114 Jn 10:18

115 When He became a Man "for our salvation" (see the Nicene Creed).

116 Jn 1:29

117 A figure Isaiah had described 700 years before, to whom Jesus compared Himself (see CCC 601). At His Baptism, He let Himself be counted among sinners as "the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 1:29), anticipated the Baptism (see Mk 10:38; Lk 12:50) of His passion and death; and agreed to His Baptism by John for the remission of sins. See CCC 536, 615; Is 52:13 - 53:12.

118 See Lk 22:17-20.

At His Last Supper, Jesus, the sinless One, fully took on "the sin of the world"¹²¹ and thus became divided from His Father.¹²² It was this division — not just fear of a death He had hitherto faced bravely — that caused His agony.

We can see the difference it made to His prayer. Only days before, He had stood at Lazarus' tomb and called on His Father with "filial boldness:"¹²³ "Father, I thank you for having heard Me. I know that you always hear Me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd." Then He called loudly, "Lazarus, come out!"¹²⁴

Now, in Gethsemane, He "went down on His knees," in anguish so great that His sweat thudded on the ground like drops of blood,¹²⁵ and begged, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours, be done."¹²⁶

He spoke in full "solidarity" with sinners:¹²⁷ *Your will, not Mine*. He had become sin, and was suffering the consequences. The most agonizing was the separation from His Father that culminated in His cry from the cross: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"¹²⁸ Here, "the innermost heart of His passion" was "not any physical pain, but radical loneliness, complete abandonment" by His Father.¹²⁹

As a matter of history, Jesus was betrayed by Judas, one of His own apostles,¹³⁰ and "rejected" by the Jewish elders, chief priests, and scribes,¹³¹ who handed Him over "to the Gentiles to be made sport of and flogged and crucified."¹³²

Actually, however, it is we sinners who were "the authors and the ministers" of His sufferings;¹³³ especially we "who continue to relapse" into our sins." Among us, Christians bear "the gravest responsibility," for we "profess to know Him."¹³⁴ We cannot lay the guilt "on the Jews in Jerusalem as a whole," nor extend it "to other Jews of different times and places." The crowd's cry — "His blood be on us and on our children!" — was simply "a formula for ratifying a judicial sentence."¹³⁵

"Jesus' blood speaks a different language from the blood of Abel:¹³⁶ it does not cry out for vengeance and punishment; it brings reconciliation. It is not poured out *against* anyone; it is poured out *for* many, *for* all."¹³⁷ Jesus died *for us*.¹³⁸

* * * * *

The charge

At Jesus' trial by the Sanhedrin,¹³⁹ the high priest Caiaphas¹⁴⁰ said, "I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether You are the Messiah, the Son of God."¹⁴¹ In His answer, Jesus called Himself "the Son of Man,"¹⁴² referring to Daniel's vision of "one like a son of man coming on the clouds of Heaven" and receiving "dominion, glory, and kingship" from "the Ancient One."¹⁴³

Caiaphas, recognizing the reference, said, "He has blasphemed! What further need have we of witnesses? Remember, you heard the blasphemy. What is your verdict?"

119 See Jn 15:5.

120 2 Cor 5:21

121 Jn 1:29; see 2 Cor 5:21.

122 "God is light; in Him there is no darkness" (1 Jn 1:5).

123 See CCC 2610, 2621, 2777-2778.

124 Jn 11:42-43

125 See Lk 22:44.

126 Lk 22:42; see Mt 26:39,42; Lk 22:42-44.

127 See CCC 602, 603.

128 Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34; Psalm 22. That psalm continues, "far from My prayer, from the words of My cry."

129 Joseph Ratzinger: *Introduction to Christianity*, II, 3. See CCC 603.

130 See Mt 26:14,21-25,47-50; Mk 14:10-11,43-45; Lk 22:1-6,47-48; Jn 6:70-71, 12:4, 13:2,21-30, 18:2-3,5.

131 See Mk 8:31.

132 Mt 21:19

133 Council of Trent: *Roman Catechism*, I, 5, 11

134 See CCC 598.

135 CCC 597

136 See Heb 12:24; Gn 4:10.

137 Pope Benedict XVI: *Jesus of Nazareth, Part Two*, 7, 3

138 See Is 52:13-15, 53:3-11.

139 Under Jewish law, this trial was highly irregular in a number of ways (see Appendix 1).

140 After failing to get exact agreement between witnesses, as Jewish law demanded (see Mk 14:55-59).

141 Mt 26:63-64; see Mk 14:61-62; Lk 22:66.

142 A name used about 80 times in the four Gospels.

143 See Dn 7:13-14; Mt 26:64; Mk 15:62; Lk 22:69.

The others replied, "He deserves death"¹⁴⁴ — prescribed by the Law of Moses.¹⁴⁵

Blasphemy, then, was the charge the Jews brought against Jesus.

Like the other subjects of the Roman Empire, the Jews were allowed to administer their own laws, but they had to refer cases involving the death penalty to the Roman governor.¹⁴⁶ Accordingly, they took Jesus to Pontius Pilate, and Pilate, very considerately, came out to them so that they would not become defiled¹⁴⁷ by entering the praetorium and thus become unable to eat the Passover.¹⁴⁸

Now the Jewish leaders knew that their charge of blasphemy would not impress Pilate, so they changed it: "We found this Man subverting our nation, opposing the payment of taxes to Caesar,¹⁴⁹ and calling Himself the Messiah, a King."¹⁵⁰

Accordingly, Pilate asked Jesus, "Are You the King of the Jews?"¹⁵¹ Jesus' reply — "My kingdom does not belong to this world"¹⁵² — seemed to reassure him, for he declared that he found no case against Jesus.¹⁵³ However, to pacify the Jews, and perhaps excite their pity,¹⁵⁴ he had Jesus flogged and brought out to them.¹⁵⁵

When he reiterated that he found no case against Him,¹⁵⁶ the Jews repeated their own charge: "We have our law, and according to that law He must die because He made Himself God's Son."¹⁵⁷

However, they also re-stressed their official charge — that in calling Himself a King, Jesus was challenging Caesar¹⁵⁸ — and eventually Pilate gave in.¹⁵⁹

The new Moses

Now Moses, who had organized worship and built God's first dwelling among humans, had prophesied that God would raise up another "prophet" *like himself*¹⁶⁰ — who would, like him, re-organize worship and build God a new dwelling.¹⁶¹

Accordingly, when Jesus died, the veil of the temple — 20 cubits long, roughly 9 m or 30 ft¹⁶² — was torn in two *from top to bottom*.¹⁶³ At that moment, "the function of the old temple" ended. *God Himself dissolved it*. No longer was that temple His "footstool,"¹⁶⁴ His dwelling on earth.¹⁶⁵ With Jesus' Self-offering, worship through signs and shadows ended.¹⁶⁶ His Self-sacrifice was the culmination of all the animal sacrifices commanded by God.¹⁶⁷

By His Resurrection — within "three days" of His death, as He had prophesied¹⁶⁸ — Jesus built the new temple, not made by human hands:¹⁶⁹ His

144 Mt 26:65-66; Mk 14:64. See Lv 24:16

145 See Lv 24:10-16.

146 "Why do you not take Him and pass judgement on Him according to your law?" Pilate asked, and the Jews replied, "We may not put anyone to death" (see Jn 18:31).

147 See Acts 10:28.

148 See Jn 18:28-29.

149 See Mt 22:15-22.

150 Lk 23:2,14

151 Jn 18:33; see Mt 27:11; Mk 15:2; Lk 23:2.

152 Jn 18:36

153 See Jn 18:38; Lk 23:4.

154 See Jn 19:4-5,12,14-15,19; Mt 27:23-24; Mk 15:12,14; Lk 23:20,22.

155 See Jn 19:1-4; Mt 27:26; Mk 15:15.

156 See Jn 19:1-4.

157 Jn 19:7

158 Jn 19:12-13

159 See Jn 19:16; Mt 27:24.

160 See Dt 18:15. Those who believed in Jesus recognized Him as such (see Jn 6:14, 7:40; Acts 3:22, 7:36).

161 See Joseph Ratzinger: *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Part One, 3. Also see Heb 3:1-6.

162 The height of Solomon's temple (see 1 Kgs 6:19-20), the model for Herod's temple. The veil divided "the holy place from the holy of holies" (Ex 26:33-34), which housed the Ark of the Covenant.

163 See Mt 27:51; Mk 15:38; Lk 23:45.

164 See Is 66:1; Mt 5:35; Acts 7:49.

165 See Ex 40:34-38; 2 Chr 7:1. In fact, the whole of the temple was destroyed just a few decades later (see Joseph Ratzinger: *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Part One, 3).

166 Jesus' "prophetic gesture of cleansing the temple" reached its "goal"; the "prophecy (see Ps 69:9; Jn 2:17) connected with it was fulfilled: 'Zeal for Your house has consumed Me'" (Ps 69:10). See Joseph Ratzinger: *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Part One, 3.

167 See Rom 8:3; Heb 8-10, 10:5-8. Also see Lv 1; 6:1-6, 4; 3, 7:11-21; 6:17-23, 5:14-26, 7:1-10

168 See Jn 2:18-19.

169 See Mk 14:58.

own living Body.¹⁷⁰ Thus He inaugurated "authentic" worship, not on Mount Moriah or Gerizim,¹⁷¹ but "in Spirit and truth."¹⁷²

The evangelists, especially John, connect Jesus' crucifixion with the Passover, at the heart of the worship organized by Moses after the first Pasch. For example:

- "Before the feast of Passover, Jesus realized that the hour had come for Him to pass from this world to the Father."¹⁷³
- Jesus' words — "This is My Blood, the Blood of the covenant"¹⁷⁴ — echoed those of Moses after the Exodus as he sprinkled the people with the blood of the sacrifices — "This is the blood of the covenant the Lord has made with you."¹⁷⁵
- Not a bone of Christ was broken,¹⁷⁶ as God had commanded for the lambs.¹⁷⁷
- Jesus, Whom John the Baptist had called the "Lamb of God,"¹⁷⁸ died on "the Preparation Day for Passover,"¹⁷⁹ 14 Nisan,¹⁸⁰ at 3 pm,¹⁸¹ when the slaughter of the paschal lambs started in the temple.¹⁸²
- When the Roman centurion "thrust a lance" into Jesus' side, "blood and water flowed out,"¹⁸³ just as the blood of the paschal lambs was flowing down from the old temple into the water of the Kidron Brook.¹⁸⁴

'Crucify Him!'

Why did the people demand so vehemently that Jesus be crucified when they had welcomed Him into Jerusalem as "King of Israel" just days before?¹⁸⁵

On Palm Sunday, they had seen Him as the Messiah and King *Who would free them from Rome*. Now they saw Him beaten, in the custody of Roman soldiers, mocked by a crown of thorns and a purple robe,¹⁸⁶ and disowned by their own leaders — just another *pseudo-Messiah*.

Jesus, they felt, had deceived them.¹⁸⁷ Barabbas had the right idea; he was prepared to fight the Romans.¹⁸⁸ As for Jesus — "Crucify Him!"¹⁸⁹ "So You are the One Who was going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days! Save Yourself, why don't You? Come down off that cross if You are God's Son!"¹⁹⁰

It had been only five days since Palm Sunday. The shock was too great for them.

However, seven weeks later, Peter "stood up" and reminded them of the miracles Jesus had performed; quoted the prophecies about Him; declared that He had been delivered up to the Romans "by the set purpose and plan of God"; and claimed that he and the others apostles were "witnesses" to His Resurrection.¹⁹¹

"Let the whole House of Israel know beyond any doubt that God has made both Lord and Messiah this Jesus Whom you crucified," He concluded. By this time, the people were "deeply shaken" and asked, "What are we to do?"¹⁹²

170 See Jn 2:18-21.

171 The Samaritans worshipped on Mount Gerizim, the Jews in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah. (See Jn 4:21.)

172 Jn 4:24

173 Jn 13:1

174 Mt 26:26-28; see Mk 14:22-24; Lk 22:17,19; 1 Cor 11:23-25.

175 Ex 24:5-8

176 See Jn 19:31-37.

177 See Ex 12:46.

178 Jn 1:29

179 Jn 19:14,31,42

180 See Jn 19:31; Mt 26:45-50.

181 See Mk 15:25,33-38; Mt 27:45-50; Lk 23:44-46.

182 "During the evening twilight" (Ex 12:6).

183 Jn 19:34

184 See Brant Pitre: *The Case For Jesus*, 11.

185 See Mt 21:9; Mk 11:9; Lk 19:38; Jn 12:13.

186 See Jn 19:2,5.

187 There are other explanations: e.g., the people could not recognize Jesus after the scourging (see Is 52:14); it was the detested Roman governor who urged them to free Him; it was too early in the morning (see Jn 18:28) for them to know what was going on; and crowds are notoriously fickle.

188 See Mk 15:7, Lk 23:19, Jn 18:40.

189 See Mt 27:22-23; Mk 15:13-14; Lk 23:21,23; Jn 19:6,15.

190 Mt 39-43. See Mk 15:29-32; Lk 23:35.

191 See Acts 2:14-35. "In support of his testimony he used many other arguments" (Acts 2:40).

192 Acts 2:36-37

"You must reform and be baptized, each one of you, that your sins may be forgiven," Peter told them; "then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."¹⁹³
And "some 3,000" were baptized that day.¹⁹⁴

Good Friday liturgy

Good Friday is a day of fast¹⁹⁵ and abstinence from meat and poultry.¹⁹⁶ There is no Mass, and no service at all until 3:00 pm, when Jesus died,¹⁹⁷ except, perhaps, for a meditation on His "Seven Last Words," spoken from the cross.¹⁹⁸

In the church, the tabernacle is wide open and the sanctuary light is out. When we enter, we do not genuflect¹⁹⁹ or make the sign of the cross with holy water — the fonts remain empty until "the blessing of the water at the Easter Vigil."²⁰⁰

The mood is one of intense mourning. The priest, who wears red, begins the service by prostrating himself before the empty sanctuary.

Part One is the Liturgy of the Word. The first Reading is from Isaiah:²⁰¹ "He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the punishment that makes us whole, and by His bruises we are healed."²⁰² The Gospel Reading is St. John's account of His Passion and death.²⁰³

Part Two comprises intercessions for the Church, the Pope, the faithful, catechumens, Christian unity, the Jews, those who do not believe in Christ, those who do not believe in God, those in public office, and those in tribulation.

In **Part Three**, the priest or deacon lifts up a large crucifix at the back of the church. Processing toward the sanctuary, he gradually removes its purple covering, intoning three times, "Behold the wood of the cross, on which hung the salvation of the world." We respond, "Come, let us adore." Then we all venerate the cross.²⁰⁴

Part Four is Holy Communion.²⁰⁵ The altar is covered with a cloth and the Blessed Sacrament brought back into the church.

At the end, the altar is stripped again and the Blessed Sacrament returned to the Altar of Repose. The people exit in silence and the church is left empty.

Easter Vigil

There is no Mass on Holy Saturday; nothing until nightfall except, perhaps, for the Stations of the Cross or the Preparation Rites for the elect.²⁰⁶

After nightfall,²⁰⁷ the Church begins her solemn Easter Vigil. It starts in darkness, outside the church, symbolizing the darkness of sin. Then the priest lights the new fire, symbolizing the light of the risen Christ.

On the large Paschal candle, he inscribes a cross, A ("alpha") and Ω ("omega"),²⁰⁸ and the digits of the current year. Then he inserts five grains of incense,²⁰⁹ praying, "By His holy and glorious wounds,²¹⁰ may Christ guard us and

193 Acts 2:38

194 Acts 2:41

195 All Catholics from their 18th birthday to their 59th must drastically reduce their intake of food.

196 Obligatory for all Catholics from their 14th birthday on.

197 See Mt 27:45-50.

198 1) "Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing" (Lk 23:34). 2) "I assure you; this day you will be with Me in paradise" (Lk 23:43). 3) "Woman, there is your son"; "there is your mother" (Jn 19:26). 4) "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34; Ps 22:2). 5) "I am thirsty" (Jn 19:28). 6) "It is finished" (Jn 19:30). 7) "Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit" (Lk 23:46).

199 Unless we do it automatically, without thinking!

200 Answer from the Congregation for the Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, March 14 2000

201 Is 52:13 - 53:12

202 Is 53:5

203 Jn 18:1 - 19:42

204 For example, by kissing the feet of the Corpus.

205 It is not Mass; the Mass, being a sacrifice, is more than the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

206 The "chosen"; i.e., those to be baptized at the Vigil that evening.

207 Defined by the Office of Liturgy for the Vancouver Archdiocese to be 9:00 pm.

208 The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, for Christ said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End" (Rv 22:13).

209 "Let my prayer come like incense before You" (Ps 141:2).

210 Tradition holds that Jesus suffered five wounds during His crucifixion: in hands, feet, and side (see Jn 19:34, 20:25,27; Ps 22:17).

protect us." Finally, he lights the candle from the new fire, saying, "May the light of Christ rising in glory dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds."

Then the priest or deacon lifts the candle high and carries it to the sanctuary of the church, stopping three times to proclaim, "The light of Christ." We respond, "Thanks be to God" and, during the procession, light our own small candles from the Paschal candle,²¹¹ symbolizing the spread of Christ's light.

Next, by candlelight, the very ancient *Exsultet*²¹² is sung. "Exult, all creation around God's throne! Jesus Christ, our King, has risen! Sound the trumpet of salvation!" The Church marvels that "to ransom a slave," God "gave away" His Son. "O truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the death of Christ!" she exclaims. "O happy fault, that earned so great, so glorious a Redeemer!"

There follow seven Readings, "all of which should be read" whenever possible, for a *vigil*,²¹³ by its nature, "demands an extended period of time."²¹⁴

- 1) Gn 1:1 - 2:2. God created the world, including Adam and Eve, by His Word.
- 2) Gn 22:1-18. God made a covenant with Abraham, born in 2166 BC.
- 3) Ex 14:15-31, 15:20,21. Abraham's grandson Jacob (Israel), had twelve sons. One of them, Joseph, was sold by his brothers to Egyptian traders, but he became the Pharaoh's vizier, averted famine in Egypt, and, when his brothers came to buy food, forgave them. In 1876 BC, Jacob's whole family (70 people) joined him. By 1446 BC, the number of Israelite men had grown to 600,000, but the Egyptians had enslaved them. Through Moses, God told Pharaoh to free them and, after the Pasch, Pharaoh agreed.²¹⁵ When he changed his mind and pursued them, God parted the Red Sea for the Israelites, but let it drown the Egyptians.
- 4) Is 54:5-14. By about 1400 BC, the Israelites had conquered the land God had promised them, but they fell into the idolatry of the original inhabitants. After about 850 BC, God sent them prophets, including Isaiah (739-680 BC).
- 5) Is 55:1-11.
- 6) Bar 3:9-15,32 - 4:4. Baruch (627-570 BC) was the prophet Jeremiah's secretary.
- 7) Ez 36:16-17a, 18-28. Between 605 and 586 BC, King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieged, attacked, and burned Jerusalem, deporting most of its inhabitants, including the prophet Ezekiel (593-570 BC).

After these Readings, there follows the triumphal singing of the *Gloria*, accompanied by the organ and continuous bell-ringing. The purple coverings are removed from images, flowers are be carried in, and the church is transformed.

Now the usual Mass Readings begin. In the First,²¹⁶ St. Paul says that if we have been united with Christ in His death, we will be united with Him in His Resurrection. Then the priest intones the solemn Easter Alleluia! ("Praise God!") — an acclamation not used since the beginning of Lent.

The Gospel Reading describes the discovery of Jesus' Resurrection: in Year A, by Matthew;²¹⁷ in B, Mark;²¹⁸ and in C, Luke.²¹⁹ "He is not here. He has been raised, exactly as He promised. Come and see the place where He was laid."²²⁰

After the homily, the choir sings the Litany of the Saints²²¹ and the priest blesses the water for Baptism. He recalls God's use of water throughout history: the abyss over which the Holy Spirit "hovered" at creation,²²² the Flood,²²³ the

211 Lighted at every Mass during the Easter Season and every Baptism and funeral during the year.

212 "Let them exult!" It dates from the fourth century; the current text, from the fifth century; and the earliest copy extant, from the seventh century.

213 "Watchfulness; keeping awake during the time usually given to sleep" (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*).

214 However, in "serious pastoral circumstances," the "Readings may be reduced" to three: one from the Law (1-3), one from the Prophets (4-7), and, always, 3, from the Book of Exodus. (See *Roman Missal*: "The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night," 20-21.)

215 See Gn 37 - 50, Ex 1 - 14:14.

216 Rom 6:3-11

217 Mt 28:1-10

218 Mk 16:1-8

219 Lk 24:1-12

220 See the Appendix.

221 See the talk on "The Communion Among the Saints in the Body of Christ," Appendix 3.

222 See Gn 1:1.

crossing of the Red Sea,²²⁴ Jesus' Baptism,²²⁵ and the water that flowed from Jesus' side on the cross.²²⁶ He ends by lowering the Paschal candle into the font²²⁷ three times, praying that "the power of the Holy Spirit" may come down into the water, so that all who die with Christ in Baptism "may rise again to life with Him."

Then the elect are baptized and confirmed, non-Catholics are received into full communion with the Catholic Church, and uncatechized Catholics are confirmed.

After that (and at all the other Easter Sunday Masses), we renew our baptismal promises and the priest sprinkles us with the baptismal water.

New creation

God "wonderfully created the dignity of human nature," but He has "still more wonderfully restored it,"²²⁸ making it, actually, a *new creation*.²²⁹

As we might expect,²³⁰ it parallels the first creation.

- On the sixth day, before the sabbath, God "finished" His work of creation;²³¹ on Good Friday, the sixth day of the week, just before the sabbath began at sundown,²³² Jesus shouted from the cross, "Now it is finished!"²³³
- On the seventh day, the sabbath, God "rested" from all His work;²³⁴ on Holy Saturday, the seventh day of the week, the sabbath,²³⁵ Jesus rested in the tomb.
- On "the first day of the week," Jesus rose from the dead.²³⁶ As the first day, it recalls the first creation; as the eighth day, it symbolizes the new creation.²³⁷

Conclusion

Easter is "the solemnity of solemnities," for "the Resurrection fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance."²³⁸

At first, Easter's date was tied to the date of Passover, but in 325 AD,²³⁹ in order to make it always fall on a Sunday, the Church changed its date to the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. This year (2024), the date of that full moon is March 25, Easter Sunday March 31,²⁴⁰ and the Jewish Passover April 22-30.²⁴¹

"Christians and Jews both celebrate the Passover": Jews, "the Passover of history, tending toward the future," Christians, "the Passover fulfilled in the death and Resurrection of Christ."²⁴²

In not recognizing Christ, Israel stumbled, Paul says, but she has not fallen for ever. "Rather, by their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles."²⁴³ As Jesus Himself said: "Salvation is from the Jews."²⁴⁴

223 See Gn 6:5 - 8:22.

224 See Ex 13:17 - 14:31.

225 See Mt 3:13-17.

226 See Jn 19:34.

227 Just as Christ Himself descended into the Jordan River at His own Baptism by John the Baptist.

228 Collect for the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord (Mass during the day).

229 See 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Eph 4:24; Col 3:10; Rv 21:5.

230 "Whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise" (Jn 5:17-19).

231 Gn 2:2

232 See Jn 19:31.

233 All the evangelists report the loud cry (see Mt 27:50; Mk 15:37; Lk 23:46), but only John has the actual words (see Jn 19:30), already uttered by Jesus at the Last Supper the night before (see Jn 17:1-4).

234 See Gn 2:2

235 Day of rest; from the Hebrew *shabbat* ("cease," "end," "rest")."

236 See Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1.

237 See CCC 2174, 1166.

238 CCC 1168, 1169

239 At the Council of Nicea.

240 Although the Church says "Today" for the full octave: March 31 - April 7 (see CCC 1095).

241 Nisan is the first month of the Jewish calendar (see Ex 12:2), and Passover is always 14 Nisan (see Ex 12:6). However, because the Jewish calendar is lunar (based on the Moon, not on the Sun), it comprises about 354 days, not 365, so 7 years out of 19 an extra month must be *intercalated* at the end of the old year. Accordingly, 15% of the time, Easter is separated from Passover by about a month.

242 "Though always in expectation of its definitive consummation" (CCC 1096).

243 See Rom 11.

244 Jn 4:22. And so is much of our liturgy (see CCC 1096).

BREAKING NEWS - BREAKING NEWS - BREAKING NEWS**He is not here: He is risen!***By Maureen T. Murphy — From The BC Catholic, April 9-15 1990*

Preliminary reports indicate that one of three men executed in Jerusalem on Friday is alive.

Sources there say a growing number of people claim to have seen and talked with Jesus, the well known Galilean preacher from Nazareth, after He was crucified for alleged blasphemy at Golgotha on Calvary Hill outside Jerusalem on Friday.

Rumours started early on Sunday morning after some women claimed they had found the grave empty when they visited the cemetery to complete the burial rites. Some ceremonies had been omitted in order to dispose of the body before the Passover festival began the evening of the execution.

The women have been variously identified as Mary of Magdala, Joanna, Salome, and Mary the mother of James.

In addition, Cleopas claims that a man he identifies as Jesus travelled with him from Jerusalem to Emmaus Sunday evening and eleven of Jesus' closest collaborators say they talked and ate with Him in Jerusalem shortly afterwards.

Emmaus is about 11 km from Jerusalem.

Jerusalem temple police accompanied by Roman soldiers seized Jesus after Jewish leaders laid charges against Him late Thursday night. He was condemned by the Sanhedrin early Friday morning and executed by Roman authorities with two other criminals later in the day.

Members of both the Jewish Pharisee and Sadducee parties have publicly condemned Jesus for stirring up dissension among the people, many of whom claim that He was the Messiah predicted by the ancient prophets.

For the last three years, Jesus has repeatedly accused both parties of religious legalism and hypocrisy. Crowds greeted Him as a king when He entered Jerusalem a week ago.

'He was definitely dead'

A spokesman for the Pharisees has charged that Jesus' body was removed from the grave by His followers Saturday night. Other Jewish authorities have suggested that Jesus had fainted from loss of blood but was not dead at the time He was buried.

However, the Roman centurion who supervised the execution denied the allegations.

"He was definitely dead when we took Him down," he said. "Following normal practice, we broke the legs of the other two to hasten their death, but when we came to Jesus we saw that

He was already dead. To make sure, we stabbed Him in the heart with a spear. There is no way He could have survived."

John, a close follower of Jesus who said he witnessed the stabbing, agreed, claiming that he saw "the last drops" of blood and water flow from the body.

The grave, supplied by Council member Joseph of Arimathea, was a cave cut into rock and closed by means of a large stone. By orders of Roman governor Pontius Pilate, under whose jurisdiction the execution took place, a seal was placed over the stone and a guard of Roman soldiers posted in the cemetery.

The precaution was requested by Jewish authorities, who feared an attempt by Jesus' followers to steal the body in order to bolster His claim that He would come back to life.

According to a statement issued by a spokesman for the guards, the body was stolen "while we were asleep." The conduct of the guards is allegedly under investigation by the Roman military authorities, but so far no charges have been laid.

Legality questioned

Alleged irregularities in Jesus' trial are also coming increasingly under attack. According to close observers in Jerusalem,

- the arrest took place in Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives about 8:30 p.m. on Thursday and the trial by the Jewish authorities lasted all through the night.
- Jesus refused to plead or to argue in His own defence.
- evidence from witnesses regarding alleged blasphemy was self-contradictory.
- disagreement between Roman Governor Pontius Pilate and Jewish Tetrarch Herod of Galilee over jurisdiction was not properly resolved before the trial.
- Governor Pilate, after twice declaring Jesus not guilty of the death sentence, yielded to pressure from the crowd outside the praetorium when he sentenced Jesus and released Barabbas, who had been found guilty of murder during the recent Jewish uprising.

Jewish high priest Caiphas, who presided over the Sanhedrin during the preliminary hearing, has stated that the court found sufficient evidence in Jesus' own words during the trial to condemn Him to death.

However, Governor Pilate publicly "washed his hands" of responsibility for the condemnation and execution.

'Son of God' sightings continue

By Maureen T. Murphy — From *The BC Catholic*, April 9-15 1990

Reports that Jesus of Nazareth is alive continue to spread, sparking reaction around the world.

In Rome, Pope John Paul II called the news that Jesus was alive "unchangeable."

The popular Galilean preacher, Who has made world headlines on numerous occasions during the last three years, was believed by many to be the long-awaited Messiah. He was crucified by Roman soldiers in Jerusalem last Friday at the instigation of Jewish authorities. Since then there have been widespread reports that He has come back to life.

Speaking from Jerusalem, Simon Peter and John, spokesmen for the apostles, Jesus' closest collaborators, and Mary Magdalene, the first to claim that He was alive, told *The Catholic Faith* that they had seen Him and talked with Him.

"Mary told us early Sunday morning that His body was not in the grave," said John. "We ran to the cemetery and saw the grave empty and the linen grave clothes lying there, but did not see Jesus."

Mary Magdalene, who stayed behind when Peter and John left, stated that "two angels" told her that Jesus was alive.

"As I turned around, I saw what I thought was the gardener," she said. "But as soon as He said my name I knew it was Jesus."

Jesus gave her a message that He would meet the apostles in Galilee, she said.

Peter said that Jesus was seen by all the apostles except Thomas, the Twin, late Sunday evening.

"He talked with us and ate some fish," he insisted.

Thomas at first refused to believe the others' story and was not convinced until he saw Jesus for himself the following week.

"I actually touched the wounds in His hands, feet and side," he told *The Catholic Faith*.

Jesus was executed by crucifixion, fastened to the cross by nails through hands and feet. He was also stabbed through the side with a spear.

Cleopas, who travelled from Jerusalem to Emmaus Sunday afternoon, claims that a stranger who travelled with him was Jesus.

"I didn't even recognize Him at first," he admitted. "It was seeing Him break bread the way He had done the night before He was executed that made me realize Who He was. Then He vanished."

Cleopas immediately returned to Jerusalem, 11 km away, to inform the apostles. According to Peter and John, Jesus was seen there only minutes after He had reportedly left Cleopas.

May be 'at war with God'

According to observers in Jerusalem, the

execution of Jesus has not solved the three-year-old problem for the Jewish authorities.

Official spokesmen for the Pharisee party, who masterminded the recent trial and crucifixion, refused to comment on the reports that He is alive.

However, *The Catholic Faith* reached councillors Gamaliel, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea at their homes in Jerusalem.

Lawyer Gamaliel made light of the Pharisees' fears about Jesus and expressed concern that in trying to eradicate His followers they might "find themselves at war with God."

"If Jesus was not the Messiah, the movement will fail of its own accord, like those of Theudas and Judas the Galilean after they were killed," he said. "If He was the Messiah, we won't be able to stop it no matter what we do."

'This man was innocent'

Nicodemus and Joseph confirmed rumors that Jesus' condemnation by the Sanhedrin had not been unanimous.

"I, for one, felt we were passing judgement on Him without giving Him a proper hearing and learning the facts," said Nicodemus.

Joseph admitted that it was he who had supplied Jesus' grave and supervised His burial, emphasizing that he had "dissented" from the actions of the rest of the Council throughout Jesus' three-year career.

The well known councillor said that it was fear and jealousy that had prompted the Jewish authorities to denounce a compatriot to the Romans.

"The lawyers and the temple police have been trying to trap Him and arrest Him for years," he said.

"They could see that Jesus was stirring up the people all the way from Galilee to Jerusalem," he said. "The raising of Lazarus was a case in point. They were afraid it would end in the destruction of the temple and the whole Jewish nation by the Romans.

"(High priest) Caiphas advised them to let one man die rather than the whole nation. At one time, they were even planning to do away with Lazarus, too," he said.

The centurion in charge of Jesus' execution, who spoke to *The Catholic Faith* on condition that he not be identified, said that "beyond all doubt, this man was innocent."

"He was truly a Son of God," he added.

Jesus was executed for blasphemy. According to the charges against Him, He had claimed to be "King of the Jews" and had been heard to refer to Himself by the name reserved for God: "I-am."