



4/14/19 Luke 22:14- 23:56 & Is. 50: 4-7

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ENTERING THE SCENE:

Since this Sunday's reading is so lengthy, I am going to ask you to have your text in hand. Take some time to sit with it and listen to it care – fully. Then, I invite you to examine the cast of characters in this text and pick out a few to 'dialogue' with as you enter into the events of these last days of Jesus' life. I suspect that each character mirrors a part of our very selves, and we can find insight by trying to imagine their situations as the drama unfolds.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: If you had been there that last week of Jesus' life and could question anyone who was with him, who would you like to talk to and why?

PRAYER: Lord, I suspect that the hardest thing about that last week of your earthly life was the sense of abandonment. First by those you had hoped would hang in there with you and finally your temporary loss of feeling the Father's presence as well. This confronts me with the reality that at my own death, I too might face this radical aloneness for a while. Help me to trust, that like you that presence of God will come flooding back as I leave this space and time for eternity. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

PETER AND JOHN: Peter and John were two of the closest disciples of Jesus. We find them mentioned often at significant moments of Jesus' life and ministry. Peter will die before this gospel is written, and John will survive only to spend his last years in exile.

What would you like to ask either of these men, if you had the chance to have uninterrupted time with them?

MAN CARRYING THE WATER JUG: This man was asked to do a 'woman's' job, thereby making him easy to spot in a crowd. Do you think he realized how significant his job would be?

Have you ever been asked to do something unusual, and later found that you played a significant role in a drama you hardly realized?

OWNER OF THE HOUSE: Jesus must have known this man.

Do you wonder if this homeowner realized the important part he was to play in our faith history?

JUDAS: Judas was the only non-Galilean in the group. All the disciples failed Jesus, but had each other to go to in their failure.

Do you think his 'outsider' status affected his choices? What would you like to ask Judas?

THE DISCIPLES: Each disciple was attracted to Jesus because he brought a revelation of God that was big enough to worship.

Which disciple do you most identify with, and why?

PETER: Peter is the patron saint of all of us who regularly put our feet in our mouths and still come out OK. He makes terrible mistakes, but eventually learns from them.

What would you like to know from Peter?

THE CROWD AT THE ARREST: There were many in that crowd that night. It is likely that a good number were people sincerely concerned about the purity of the truth about God.

If you would have been alive there, might you have been in the crowd? If not, why not?

THE HIGH PRIEST'S SERVANT WHO'S EAR WAS SEVERED AND RESTORED: Sometimes we are drawn into historic moments because of our jobs.

If you were a family member of this man, what questions might you have of him when he returned home?

THE TEMPLE GUARDS AND THE ELDERS AT THE ARREST: These people were guardians of the “truth”. This truth admitted of no new revelations.

Have you ever ‘guarded’ a truth that moved you to the point of wanting to destroy in order to protect that truth?

THE THREE SERVANT GIRLS IN THE COURTYARD OF PETER’S DENIAL: These young women were on the scene as this out of the ordinary arrest was in process.

Why do you think they persisted in questioning Peter that night?

THE COUNCIL: In order for it to appear legitimate the high priest and the scribes involve the council in this unusual trial.

If you had been on this council, what feelings or questions do you think you would have had?

PILATE: Pilate was the servant of Rome and his job was to keep things orderly and the tax support flowing to headquarters. He served at the pleasure of the occupying powers. He was well aware that the religious authorities were using him for their own agenda. Shortly after the Resurrection, Pilate was demoted to an obscure outpost.

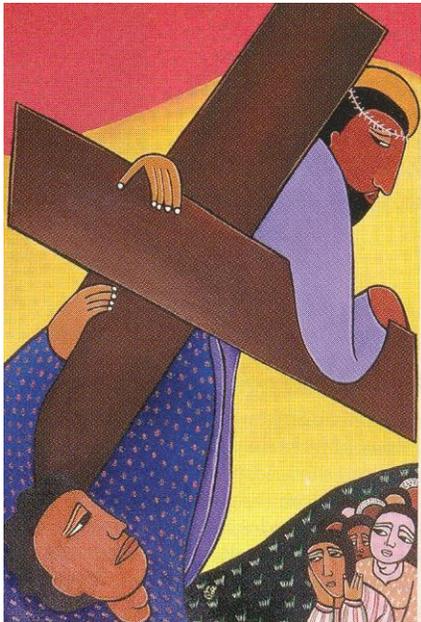
Are there any areas in your life where you are beholden to an occupying power that could make you vulnerable to being used? What advice would you think Pilate might give you if you asked for help?

HEROD: Herod was eager to see Jesus and maybe experience a miracle. But Jesus would not give them any entertainment or answer. This infuriated Herod, so he and his guards abused Jesus and ridiculed him.

If you had been there, what would you like to ask Herod after Jesus was sent back to Pilate?

BARABBAS: Barabbas, which means, son of the Father had actually done what the chief priest and elders were accusing Jesus of doing; that is, he was a revolutionary who had killed on behalf of his cause.

If you had been the one to set Barabbas free, what would you have asked him?



SIMON THE CYRENEAN: Simon was just coming in from the fields and he finds himself pressed into helping a poor beaten man carry his cross. Mark tells us that he was the father of two well-known Christians, Alexander and Rufus.

What do you think the family talked about the night after he helped Jesus carry the cross? Do you think his experience that day was the beginning of a major change in his entire family? (Laura James 2002 contemporary American Artist)

WOMEN WEeping: Luke once again brings to our attention the pivotal part that women played in Jesus’ life. Even though they were powerless to change much in the power structures of their day, they were faithful to their love and concern for Jesus.

Is there a way that being powerless in the world’s sense of the word, can free a person to respond with love? Do you think that expression of love helped Jesus that day?

TWO CRIMINALS: One criminal only could see Jesus as a potential way out of the situation, the other saw Jesus as someone unjustly condemned. One believed only in this space-time life, the other believed in a life beyond life. These two positions were the beliefs that were in question that day.

Which criminal do you most easily identify with and why?

JEERING LEADERS AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS-: Those jeering at the foot of the cross, were the ones that believed that physical life in this world was the only truth, and

the one dying on the cross would help them prove their point. We are often willing to kill the one who challenges our truths.

How do we do that today?

CENTURION/ FRIENDS OF JESUS / WOMEN AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS: The Centurion was there because he was doing his job. The friends and the women were there because they loved the man Jesus. We are often involved in a situation where we are thrown in among people who are present for many different reasons, and find out later that we have more in common than we thought. The Centurion came to see that Jesus was innocent. The friends and women already knew this.

If you could have shared with any of these people later in the day, which one would you have sought out? What would you have wanted to share with them?

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA: Luke tells us that Joseph was looking eagerly for the reign of God. He risked a lot by asking for the body of Jesus in a culture that thought criminals should not have a decent burial, but be thrown into the town dump instead.

If you could have helped Joseph bury Jesus' body, what do you think the two of you might have felt that night? Do you think you would have been lifelong friends after that?

I have invited you to approach this week's reading in a very different way. This is because I feel that we try to imagine ourselves in the same awe filled situations that the people of the gospels. Unless we do this, we can remain safely outside the experience of connecting our lives with the lives of those who were willing to die rather than deny what they experienced. This way our faith can remain safely in our heads and not move dangerously into our hearts. I hope that this way of approaching Luke's carefully composed testimony has helped you go deeper into the mystery of the life and death of Jesus. Hopefully, it can also lead you into a more mature understanding of the Resurrection that we all are betting our lives on as well.

PARALLEL TEXTS: Lk. 22:18 // Mt. 26:29; Mk. 14:25; Lk. 22:19f // Mt. 26:26f; Mk. 14:17-21; Lk. 22:21f // Mt. 26:20-25; Mk. 14:17-21; Jn. 13:21-30; Lk. 22:25f // Mt. 20:25-28; Mk. 10:42f; Lk. 22:27 // Jn. 13:4-15; Lk. 22:30 // Mt. 19:28; Lk. 22:24 // Lk. 22:61; Mt. 26:33f; Mk. 14:29f; Jn. 13:36f. Lk. 22:35 // Lk. 10:4; Mk. 10:9; Lk. 22:37 // Lk. 23:32; Is. 53:12; Lk. 22:39-46 // Mt. 26:30,46-46; Mk. 14:26, 32-42; Lk. 22:47-53 // Mt. 26:47-56; Mk. 14:43-50; Jn. 18: 3-11; Lk. 22:54-62 // Mt. 26:58, 69-75; Mk. 14, 66-72; Jn. 18:15-18, 25f; Lk. 22:61 // Lk. 22:34; Mt. 26:34; Mk. 14:30; Jn. 13:38; Lk. 22:63f // Mt. 26:67f; Mk. 14:65; Lk. 22:66 - 71 // Mt. 26:59-66; Mk. 14:54-64; Lk. 22:66 // Mt. 27:1; Mk. 15:1; Lk. 22:70 // Wis. 2:13; Lk. 22:70 // Jn. 10:30; Lk. 23:1 // Mt. 27:1; Jn. 18:28; Lk. 23:2 -5// Mt. 27:11-14; Mk. 15:2-5; Jn. 18:29-38; Lk. 20:22-25; Acts 17:7; 24:5; Mt. 27:15-26; Mk. 15:7-15; Jn. 18:39-19:16; Lk. 23:24 f// Acts 3:14f; Lk. 23:26 // Mt. 27:31f; Mk. 15:20f; Lk. 23:30 // Hos. 10:8; Rev. 6:16; Lk. 23:32 // Lk. 22:37; Is. 53:12; Lk. 23:33 f // Mt. 27:33; Mk. 15:22f; Lk. 23:34 // Jn. 19:17; Ps. 22:19; Acts 7:60; Lk. 23:35-38 // Mt. 27:39-43; Mk. 15:29-32; Lk. 23:36 // Mt. 27:48; Lk. 23:44 // Jn. 19:19; Mt. 27:44; Mk. 15:32; Lk. 23:44f // Mt. 27:45-50; Mk. 15:33-37; Lk. 23:46 // Ps. 31:6; Jn. 19:30; Acts 7:60; Lk. 23:47 // Mt. 27:54; Mk. 15:39; Lk. 23:49 // Lk. 24:10; Lk. 23:50-5 // Mt. 27:57-61; Mk. 15:42-47; Jn. 19: 38-41; Lk. 23:56 // Mk. 16:1-8;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Is. 50:4-7; [Ps. 22:8-9, 17-20, 23-23](#); Phil. 2:6-11; Lk. 22:14-23:56;
Revised Common Lectionary: Is. 50:4-9; [Ps. 31:9-16](#); Phil. 2:5-11; Lk. 22:14-23:56;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

Luke differs from the other Gospels in that the mocking of Jesus begins early and becomes a major motif of the passion. In Luke's account the trial is deferred to the morning, while Jesus is held overnight in the courtyard, where he is mocked. In the other Gospels the humiliation begins only after the verdict of condemnation. In Luke's narrative it continues with Herod, the Roman soldiers, the rulers of the people, the executioners, and even the criminal on the cross next to Jesus. Excluded from this list, however, is the crowd, passive but not opposed. And then, of course, another not joining in is the good thief, a final exemplar of repentance in the Gospel, bringing this part to a conclusion. Upon Jesus's death not only the women who had accompanied him from Galilee but also the crowd gathered for the spectacle leave in sorrow, "beating their breasts" (23:48—49). At the end Jesus is buried by Joseph of Arimathea, whom Luke describes in language that recalls the faithful villagers in the first two chapters. Pgs. 152-3
[Jesus and his Enemies](#) Fr. Robert Beck

The loneliness of the cross led Jesus to the resurrection. As we grow older we are often invited by Jesus to follow him into this loneliness, the loneliness in which God is too close to be experienced by our limited hearts and minds. When this happens, let us pray for the grace to surrender our spirits to God as Jesus did. Henri Nouwen

This Week in History: 4/6/648 BCE: The earliest eclipse (by one reckoning) recorded by the Greeks

Lk. 23:34: Here the full significance of the discipline of prayer becomes visible. Prayer allows us to lead into the center of our hearts not only those who love us but also those who hate us. This is possible only when we are willing to make our enemies part of ourselves and thus convert them first of all in our own hearts. Pg. 111. Nouwen, Henri, et al. *Compassion*. NY. Image Books. 1983.

In like measure, Aristotle could never understand the story of the "good thief" (see Luke 23:39-43). The idea that at the end of one's otherwise disreputable life, one could enter, by Christ's mercy and forgiveness, the kingdom of God contradicts Aristotle's notion of a life dedicated to virtue that alone yields the good life. For Aristotle, human logic based on strict justice, and not the logic of unmerited mercy, singularly governed the moral life. Thus Aristotle would be repulsed by the crucifixion of Jesus and what Christians make out of it. Yet, for the Christian who believes that the end of human existence is the kingdom, the cross is essential. By the cross, the kingdom was won. The cross is the symbol of God's merciful love for us, that while we were still sinners, God loved us and saved us (see Romans 5:8) in fact, for Aristotle any attempt to identify mercy with God would be preposterous. Mercy was a practice only for those who did not know otherwise. Harrington, Daniel –Keenan, James [Jesus and Virtue Ethics](#). NY. Sheed & Ward Book. 2002.

After the 'individual's fundament choice' will come the common option of the mass of mankind. A day must come, he believes, when men 'will have finally become conscious of their common unity and their intimate links with all the rest of the universe, and will hold in their hands the plenitude of their soul, to cast it freely into the divine centre'. It is then that the final option will be made, in the form of a world's choice between revolt and worship. Pg. 113. de Lubac, Henri. [The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin](#). NY. Desclee Co. 1962.

There is a point at which everything becomes simple and there is no longer any question of choice, because all you have staked will be lost if you look back. Life's point of no return. 54 Hammarskjöld

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has his foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality." - Archbishop Desmond Tutu

The willingness to commit ourselves rises from our awareness that we will be completed by someone or something outside ourselves. The whole nature of this experience is a crossing of the boundaries of self-regard. We lay open our lives; we lay down our lives. We are no longer slaves or hirelings, but friends. Everything that now happens shapes and forms this friendship, this relationship. Rather, it is the relationship, the friendship which lets us interpret and understand the real meaning of what happens. There is a new understanding of what is possible, what is permissible, what is tolerable which is created in this mutual knowledge and exchange. This is fruit that will remain. Fr. David Bock

For me, the cross is about a God who is with us when we suffer in a way that only someone who has also suffered can be.
- Ellen Painter Dollar

"Drinking the cup is an act of selfless love, an act of immense trust, an act of surrender to a God who will give what we need when we need it." "Drinking our cup is not simply adapting ourselves to a bad situation and trying to use it as well as we can. Drinking our cup is a hopeful, courageous, and self-confident way of living. It is standing in the world with head erect, solidly rooted in the knowledge of who we are, facing the reality that surrounds us and responding to it from our hearts." -Henri Nouwen, Can You Drink the Cup?

The "cross," rightly understood, always reveals various kinds of resurrection. It's as if God were holding up the crucifixion as a cosmic object lesson, saying: "I know this is what you're experiencing. Don't run from it. Learn from it, as I did. Hang there for a while, as I did. It will be your teacher. Rather than losing life, you will be gaining a larger life. It is the way through." Richard Rohr

The image of the cross was to change humanity, not a necessary transaction to change God—as if God needed changing! Duns Scotus concluded that Jesus' death was not a "penal substitution" but a divine epiphany for all to see. Jesus was pure gift. The idea of gift is much more transformative than necessity, payment, or transaction. It shows that God is not violent, but loving. It is we who are violent. For the Franciscan school, Jesus was not changing God's mind about us; he was changing our minds about God. If God and Jesus are not violent or vindictive, then our excuse for the same is forever taken away from us. If God is punitive and torturing, then we have permission to do the same. Thus grew much of the church's violent history. The cross was not necessary, but a pure gift so that humanity could witness God's outflowing Love in dramatic form. Richard Rohr

Diamonds do not dazzle with beauty unless they are cut. When cut, the rays of the sun fall on them and make them shine with wonderful colors. So when we are cut by the cross, we shall shine as jewels in the kingdom of God. - Sadhu Sundar Singh

Have you seen the movie "Spartacus"? There have been several versions of the story of this Thracian gladiator and slave (109-71 B.C.) who united his fellow slaves in a revolt against the Roman Empire. Historians estimate that the slave army grew to between 90,000 to 125,000 people at its peak. After several successful onslaughts on Rome, Spartacus and his army were defeated. Although his body was never found, some 6,000 slaves were crucified all along the road from Rome to Capua. This cruel punishment was intended to warn others against any further insurrection.

"When the angels of death have swept all the worthless rubbish that we call our history out of the rooms of our consciousness (though of course the true reality of our actions in freedom will remain); when all the stars of our ideals, with which we ourselves in our own presumption have draped the heaven of our own lived lives, have burned out and are now extinguished; when death has built a monstrous, silent void, and we have silently accepted this in faith and hope as our true identity; when then our life so far, however long it has been, appears only as a single, short explosion of our freedom that previously presented itself to us stretched out in slow motion, an explosion in which question has become answer, possibility reality, time eternity, and freedom offered freedom accomplished; when then we are shown in the monstrous shock of a joy beyond saying that this monstrous, silent void, which we experience as death, is in truth filled with the originating mystery we call God, with God's light and with God's love that received all things and gives all things; and when then out of this pathless mystery the face of Jesus, the blessed one, appears to us and this specific reality is the divine surpassing of all that we truly assume regarding the past-all-graspingness of the pathless God -then, then I don't want actually to describe anything like this, but nevertheless, I do want to stammer some hint of how a person can for the moment expect what is to come: by experiencing the very submergence that is death as already the rising of what is coming." Karl Rahner

Information on the cross: <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/crucifixion/the-staurogram/>

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Shea, John. Stories of Faith. Thomas More Press, Chicago. 1980. FRIDAY & SATURDAY: Page 213.

Janice Grana Ed. Images. St. Mary's College Press, Winona MN 1976. DID YOU EVER CRY, JESUS: Page 93. NOT FOR THE HESITANT: Page 130.