

Connecting With the Sunday Readings

Passion Sunday

We now move into the heart of the Church's liturgical year, the holiest week of all. It is filled with drama: a triumphant parade into Jerusalem, a festive meal with those closest to Jesus which has a surprising twist, a tortuous time of prayer in the garden, arrest, trial, judgment, torture, the difficult walk to Calvary, the crucifixion. That is a lot to pack into a single week. We recall the drama every year so that we won't forget that God loves us more than we can even imagine; that Jesus: God and human, took on our life with all its hardship, difficulties, suffering and even death to be as close as is possible to our condition. This week is an account of how much love will do—if necessary.

A Gospel Word for the Home

Luke 22:14-23:56 or Luke 23:1-49

The Gospel account of the last days of Jesus is real. While some seek to walk around these events as if they really didn't happen, we accept their basic accuracy and then we ask why. Why would God allow such a death to his own beloved Son? It is a question that is not easily answered. We can look at the historical evidence. The values that Jesus espoused, the emphasis on justice for all, the questioning of the abuse of power over the weak, the demand that all are equal—all these values demanded that society change and that those in power share it with others. Jesus became a danger to the *status quo*.

Thought for the Week

Still, Jesus placed himself in this trying situation, knowing what was at stake. He could not compromise his message of justice, equality, and compassion. In fact, it was compassion that was at the heart of his message. God had compassion on us, all of us, even those who crucified him. We are challenged in making sense of the events of Holy Week. They express more than any other event in world history God's involvement in human life. In the end, God brought life from death. That we live in a world loved by God is not apparent on the surface. The daily news is often much more about evil, suffering, tragedy and death, than about the goodness of life. And ever more difficult to see is that God's love is at the heart of everything and everyone.

Parent Survival

All that Jesus did was for the good of those around him and also to provide us with an example of how we can best live. His life of loving those he met stands as a challenge to us every day. For parents, love begins at home with one's own children. We as parents are stand-ins for God. Our children know about God's love because they experience it through us. How significant is the daily and quite ordinary love of parents? It is sacramental and sacred. It includes the most basic of human tasks: feeding, clothing, and giving shelter. Toward the end of the Gospel according to Matthew (25:35-40) is that well-known scene of judgment where the criteria of judgment is very down to earth and one that most parents are familiar with. "For I was hungry and you gave me food" "Whatever you did for the least of these (which covers everyone)... you did for me." What a major role parents play in making God's love real every day.

Car or Meal Talk

In simple terms, tell your children the story of the death of Jesus and point out that Jesus did this because he loves each of us very much.

One-Line Prayer

Thank you God for your deep love for us. Help us to love you and all those you have created. Amen.