

The Road to The Cross:  
Who are you in the crowd?  
Holy Week  
March 25– 28, 2024

Please enter the Sanctuary and find a seat in the pews. Follow the guideline in this book.

In consideration of others, we ask that you proceed quietly through this experience so not to distract others in any way.

The final step of the journey is at the cross on the platform. Here, there is an opportunity for you to leave something at the cross.

Please sign our guest register in the lobby as you leave.

May you be inspired, encouraged, and challenged as you contemplate the suffering and humiliation Christ was willing to go through to give us the peace and assurance of eternity with him.

## INTRODUCTION

“Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
In my place condemned he stood,  
Sealed my pardon with his blood;  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!”

Phillip Bliss  
Song 183 V 2,  
SASB 2015

Jesus' humiliation, suffering and death on the cross was necessary for our salvation and the peace and assurance of eternity with Him we experience, knowing he bore our sins.

We invite you to meditate on this suffering and humiliation as we journey with Jesus from the Garden of Gethsemane to His death on the cross. We will meditate on selected scripture, using the ancient spiritual discipline of *Lectio Divina* (holy listening)\*, and then using the ancient spiritual discipline of *Visio Divina* (holy seeing)\*, ponder where we are in the picture as we view the art created for these scripture passages.

\*Steps for *Lectio Divina* and *Visio Divina*<sup>1</sup>

1. Quiet your inside noise and enter God's presence. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your prayer, opening your heart, mind, ears and sight.
2. Read the selected scripture passage slowly and meditatively. Which words stand out to you? What is God saying to you? Do you see yourself in this passage? If so, who or what do you relate to?
3. Now look at the artwork depicting this scripture passage. Gaze at the image before you with openness and seek to see with God's eyes.
4. Notice what stirs within you. Is there someone/something in the image that you relate to? What connection does the image make with your life?
5. Respond to God about what you are seeing and sensing. What do you want to take with you and remember about this time of prayer?

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<sup>1</sup> Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2015), 48, 186.

## Agony in The Garden

### *Lectio Divina*

- Read Luke 22: 39-46
  - Quiet your mind, allowing time for God to speak to you.
  - Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus experienced all our struggles, testing and suffering. What human emotions do you see him struggling with in this passage?
  - Do you see yourself in this passage? If so, who or what do you relate to?
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In v 44 of our Scripture reading, it says:  
“...being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.” (NIV)

### *Visio Divina*

Look at the picture on the next page.



- What is God showing you in this picture?
- Is there someone/something in the image that you relate to?
- What connection does the image make with your life?
- Respond to God about what you are seeing and sensing.

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## Denied by Peter

### *Lectio Divina*

- Read Luke 22: 31-34, 54-62
  - Quiet your mind, allowing time for God to speak to you.
  - What do you think Jesus felt, hearing Peter deny knowing him?
  - Do you see yourself in this passage? If so, who or what do you relate to?
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Peter was the only disciple to have not deserted Jesus, but his courage failed in the courtyard when confronted about being a follower of Jesus. Read Luke 22: 32 again. Jesus knew Peter would deny him, but he also knew Peter loved him and would repent.

Have you made promises or vows to God that you have failed to keep? Jesus sees us not for what we are, but for what we can become. He understands why we fail. But he does not desert us, he picks us up and gives us a second chance. He empowers us to succeed the next time.

## *Visio Divina*

Look at the picture below



- What is God showing you in this picture?
- Is there someone/something in the image that you relate to?
- What connection does the image make with your life?
- How does knowing he will give us second chances make you feel?
- Respond to God about what you are seeing and sensing.

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## Condemned to Death

### *Lectio Divina*

- Read Matthew 27: 1-2, 11-24.
- Quiet your mind, allowing time for God to speak to you.
- How do you think Jesus felt hearing the crowds – his people - demanding he be crucified?
- Do you see yourself in this passage? If so, who or what do you relate to?

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Pilate was hesitant to convict Jesus. The evidence was not there to hold up a conviction in Roman law. But Pilate valued his position and the Jewish leaders challenged his loyalty to Caesar as recorded in John 19:12 (NIV)“If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.” The Jewish leaders were implying they would ruin Pilate’s career if he did not convict Jesus. Thus, he turned his back on Jesus and called for a bowl of water and washed his hands claiming to be innocent of Jesus blood.



## *Visio Divina*

Look at the picture below



- What is God showing you in this picture?
- Is there someone/something in the image that you relate to?
- What connection does the image make with your life?
- Respond to God about what you are seeing and sensing.

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## Mocked By The Soldiers

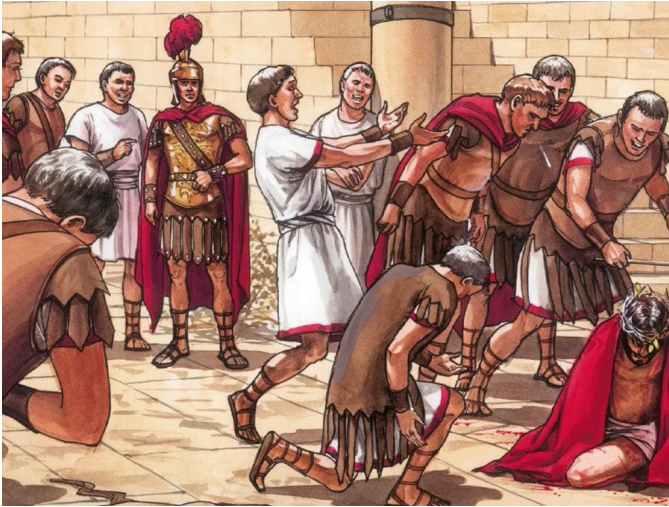
### *Lectio Divina*

- Read Matthew 27: 26-31
  - Quiet your mind, allowing time for God to speak to you.
  - Jesus was ridiculed, mocked and spit upon – bullied and harassed we would say today. How do you think he felt?
  - Do you see yourself in this passage? If so, who or what do you relate to?
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Jesus was whipped, dressed as a king in a robe, and a crown (of thorns) was jammed on his head. The thorns would have dug into his head, sending rivets of blood coursing down over his face.

### *Visio Divina*

Look at the picture on the next page.



- What is God showing you in this picture?
- Is there someone/something in the image that you relate to?
- What connection does the image make with your life?
- Respond to God about what you are seeing and sensing.

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## Forced to Carry His Cross

### *Lectio Divina*

- Read John 19:16-17 and Luke 23: 26-27
- Quiet your mind, allowing time for God to speak to you.

Crucifixion was a public event. The condemned person was forced to carry the heavy crossbeam through the streets of Jerusalem to Golgotha. The Romans wanted everyone to see that crime does not pay.

Jesus was bruised and beaten. He staggered and stumbled from the torture he endured and was no longer able to carry his cross. The Soldiers made Simon of Cyrene carry the cross for him.

Jesus would have seen and heard the crowds lining the streets as he stumbled through them. Some were his accusers; some were simply curious. Others were his friends and followers, horrified at what was happening. Many of them were probably part of the crowd who welcomed into Jerusalem waving palm branches and laying their cloaks on the ground before him just a few days before.

### *Visio Divina*

Look at the picture on the next page.



- What is God showing you in this picture?
- Is there someone/something in the image that you relate to? Who are you in the crowd?
- What connection does the image make with your life?
- Respond to God about what you are seeing and sensing.

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## Crucified Between Two Thieves

### *Lectio Divina*

- Read Luke 23: 32-43, 49; John 19:25-27
  - Quiet your mind, allowing time for God to speak to you.
  - Do you see yourself in these passages? If so, who or what do you relate to?
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John was at the foot of the cross as was Mary, his mother and other women. But there is no mention of the other disciples, or those Jesus considered friends. Were they part of the crowd that watched from a distance?

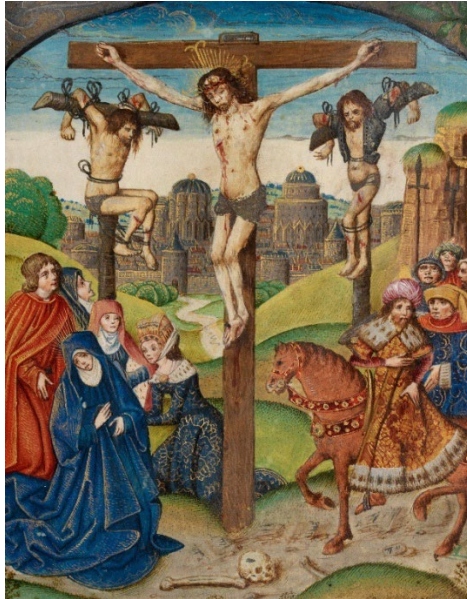
Contrary to pictures we see of Jesus on the cross, he would not have been wearing a loincloth. He would have been stripped naked before the crowd – the ultimate in humiliating events. As he hung there, the crowds, the soldiers and even one of the thieves mocked and cursed him. But Jesus did not strike back. Instead, he prayed “Father forgive them.” (v34).

One of the thieves overheard this prayer. He realized that there was something different about him and realized that indeed he was who he claimed to be. Thus he turned to Jesus and

asked to be remembered when he came into his kingdom. (v42-43).

*Visio Divina*

Look at the picture below



- What is God showing you in this picture?
- Is there someone/something in the image that you relate to?
- What connection does the image make with your life?
- Respond to God about what you are seeing and sensing.

## Death

### *Lectio Divina*

- Read John 19: 30, 35-42
  - Quiet your mind, allowing time for God to speak to you.
  - Do you see yourself in this passage? If so, who or what do you relate to?
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Two members of the Sanhedrin, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea, were secret followers of Jesus. Scripture does not tell us if they were present when Jesus was interrogated by the Sanhedrin, or if they were silent out of fear. But now, any cowardice and fear were gone. They made a courageous tribute that all could see. Joseph asked for permission to take Jesus' body to bury in his (Joseph's) tomb. And Nicodemus bought the ointments and spices to anoint his body in death. 75 pounds worth! This was the amount appropriate for royalty!

### *Visio Divina*

Look at the picture on the next page.





- What is God showing you in this picture?
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  - Respond to God about what you are seeing and sensing.
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## The Empty Cross

If you are able, please come to the platform and sit in one of the chairs surrounding the cross.

Three times in Scripture, Jesus told His disciples He would be killed but would rise again on the third day.<sup>2</sup> Yet, they did not understand.<sup>3</sup> Thus, once he was laid in the tomb, His family, friends and followers thought this was the end.

But we know this wasn't the end. We have the benefit of knowing that Jesus DID rise again, that He paid the price for our sins through His cruel death on the cross. John 3:16 (NIV) says:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

What a wonderful promise this is! What perfect peace we attain when we accept Jesus! Because of His journey to the cross, we know

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<sup>2</sup> Jesus predicts his death and resurrection for the first time: Matt 16:21-28, Mark 8:31-9:1, Luke 9:22-27.

Jesus predicts his death and resurrection for the second time: Matt 17: 22-23, Mark 9:30-32, Luke 9:43b-45.

Jesus predicts his death and resurrection for the third time: Matt 20:17-19, Mark 10:32-34, Luke 18:31-34.

<sup>3</sup> Mark 9:32, Luke 9:45, Luke 18:34.

death is not the end, but we will spend eternity with him.

Matt Redman penned the words to the song Once Again in. In our final moments of this journey, I would like you to mediate on these words:

“Jesus Christ, I think upon your sacrifice  
You became nothing, poured out to death  
Many times I've wondered at your gift of life  
And I'm in that place once again

And once again I look upon the cross where  
you died  
I'm humbled by your mercy and I'm broken  
inside  
Once again I thank you  
Once again I pour out my life...”

As we journeyed this road to the cross, you were asked to place yourself in the story. Did you gain insights on areas you may need to improve on in your Christian growth? Has God revealed an area in your life you need to improve on, or any sins you need to confess to Him and leave at the cross? You can record your thoughts here, and if you wish, you can write what you wish to leave at the foot of the cross on a note and tack it to the cross.

Dear Lord,

Your disciple Peter wanted to know  
who would betray you.

You pointed to Judas but a little later  
also to him.

Judas betrayed, Peter denied you.

Judas hanged himself,

Peter became the apostle whom you made the  
first among equals.

Lord, give me faith,

faith in your endless mercy,

your boundless forgiveness,

your unfathomable goodness.

Let me not be tempted to think that my sins are  
too great to be forgiven,

too abominable to be touched by your mercy.

Let me never run away from you

but return to you again and again,

asking you to be my Lord,

my Shepherd, my Stronghold, and my Refuge.

Lord, look at me, accept my prayer

as you accepted Peter's prayer,

and let me not run away from you

in the night as Judas did.

Bless me, Lord, in this Holy Week,

And give me the grace

to know your loving presence more intimately.

Amen.

Henri Nouwen (Book Discussion 2024)







Thank you for participating in this Holy Week meditation.

Please sign our guest book

If this experience has been a blessing, a challenge, or a means of building your faith, please leave us your comments.

Thank you to Sandy Reid for the inspiration and scripture references.

Thank you to Jim Willis for assisting in finding the art work and the printing of the booklets and pictures.

Thank you to Major Roy Snow for supporting this endeavour.

And thank you Jesus, for caring enough about us that you were willing to endure the suffering and humiliation of the cross so we could be with you!