

Lenten Retreat in Daily Living
Prayer Material for Week 7 of Retreat

Day 1 through Good Friday: The Passion and Death of Jesus

Grace: Understanding Jesus is dying for me (for others, but for me). Remorse that Jesus is suffering for me, even to feel anguish and tears.

Your prayer material for these days is St. Matthew's account of the passion and death of Jesus. (Matthew 26:57-75; 27:1-66) Read the entirety at the beginning of the week and take manageable portions for each day of prayer.

As you pray with Jesus passion, engage yourself and your life in these events. Let yourself be intimately attentive to Jesus' sufferings during your contemplations. Be sure to share with Jesus, not only your reactions to his suffering, but also your concerns, needs, desires, sufferings. Be attentive to God's response to you.

Before you begin your contemplation this week, you may wish to read the attached pages on Jesus passion and suffering, which help clarify the difference between feeling a thing from outside it vs. partaking in it oneself.

Holy Saturday: Tomb Day

Grace: Understanding what it would mean to live in a world without Jesus.

After Christ dies, spend some time in the space between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection – in the world without Jesus. Experience His absence and be mindful of your feelings. Share with God as you are moved.

Easter Sunday through When we Meet for our Last Session: The Resurrection

Grace: To feel glad and to rejoice intensely because Jesus Christ rises in exultation and in great power and glory.

Spend whatever periods you have for prayer before our final meeting contemplating the Resurrection. Here are some possibilities for your prayer:

The Risen Jesus Goes to His Mother

There is no Scripture for this appearance, but it is presumed Jesus appeared first to Mary.

Be with Jesus and Mary in their joyful reunion. How does Mary feel seeing her son alive? How does Jesus feel? How do you feel?

Stay attentive to the feelings and actions of Mary and Jesus, and share with them your feelings.

John 20: 1-18 – Appearance to Mary Magdalene

Contemplate Mary and the other women going to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body. See their astonishment when they discovered the stone rolled away and Jesus' body missing. Notice Mary weeping. What is she feeling?

See the encounter between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, when he proclaims "Mary!" and she says "Teacher!" What are they both feeling? What are you feeling?

Be with Mary as she runs back to the disciples and proclaims "I have seen the Lord!" What is she feeling? What are their reactions?

Let yourself enter into the joy of this moment. Converse with Jesus or Mary as you feel drawn.

Luke 24: 13-35 – Appearance on the Road to Emmaus

Contemplate this walk and walk with Jesus and the two disciples. Notice the disciples' distress and pain. Listen to Jesus explain the meaning of the events of the last several days.

Be with them at the table as Jesus blessed and broke the bread. Notice how "their eyes were opened and they recognized him." Notice their response "Were not our hearts burning within us...?"

What are you feeling as you contemplate this event? Converse with Jesus and the disciples as you feel moved.

RETREAT IN EVERYDAY LIFE

THOUGHTS ON JESUS' PASSION AND SUFFERINGS

How can I be present to the sufferings of Jesus in my prayer?

We can describe it by comparing it with the silence we maintain in the room of a dying person... We stay silent: the one about to die has secrets about which we have no inkling... Or again the way we read the passion might resemble the way we read, alone or with someone else, a letter recounting the last moments of a person dear to us. The distracted or superficial gaze, the heart that is filled with self--these cannot maintain this presence. (Jean LaPlace, S.J.)

I saw the red blood trickle down from under garland, hot and fresh and plentiful, as it did at the time of his Passion when the crown of thorns was pressed into his blessed head--he who was both God and man and who suffered for me. And I knew in my heart that he showed me this himself without any go-between.

And while I saw the blood flow from his head I never ceased from saying, "Blessed be the Lord."

In all this I was greatly stirred in love for all my fellow-Christians, for I wanted them to know and see what I saw so that it would comfort them. For this sight was shown for all the world.

As I see it, God is all that is good, has made all that is made, and loves all he has made. So the person who loves all one's fellow-Christians for God's sake, loves all that is made. (Julian of Norwich)

We pray to God because of his holy body and precious blood, his blessed Passion, and his most dear death and wounds.

As the body is clad in clothes, and the flesh in the skin, and the bones in the flesh, and the heart in the whole, so are we clothed, body and soul, in the goodness of God and enfolded in it.

Our lover desires that our soul should cling to him with all its might, and that we should ever hold fast to this goodness. For this above all else pleases God and strengthens the soul.

God who made us for love, will by that same love restore us to our former blessedness--and yet more. (Julian of Norwich)