



## Life from Death

**W**e are just one week away from the beginning of the Holy Week and today's Second Reading and Gospel passage already introduces us to the basic truth that our salvation is the fruit of the dramatic death of Jesus Christ. It was through his sacrificial death that the life-giving New Covenant was sealed.

Life from death is also the challenge addressed to each of us. If we want the life of grace to grow within us, we must be prepared to die to our pride and any other form of negative passions. It is only when we die to our lower selves that we can start living unto the Lord. Then we are active partners in the New Covenant.

Let us offer this Eucharist for this intention even as we continue praying for peace and justice in the world.



### INTRODUCTORY RITES



#### Entrance Antiphon

*(To be recited only when no Entrance Hymn is sung.)*

**Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning, rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.**

#### Greeting

*P* –The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you!

*All* –**And with your spirit!**

#### Penitential Act

*P* –My brothers and sisters, as we prepare to celebrate the mystery of Christ's love, let us call to mind our sins and ask him for pardon and strength. *(Pause)*

*P* –You are the Author of the new and eternal Covenant. Lord, have mercy!

*All* –**Lord, have mercy!**

*P* –You are the seed whose death produced the fruit of eternal life for sinful mankind. Christ, have mercy!

*All* –**Christ, have mercy!**

*P* –You draw all human beings to yourself through your death and resurrection. Lord, have mercy!

*All* –**Lord, have mercy!**

*P* –May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

*All* –**Amen!**

#### Collect (Opening Prayer)

*P* –By your help, we beseech you, Lord our God, may we walk eagerly in that same charity with which, out of love for the world, your Son handed himself over to death.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

*All* –**Amen!**

### LITURGY OF THE WORD



**1st Reading** *Jer 31:31-34*

*The prophecy of a "New Covenant" written not on stone but on the hearts of people is of vital importance in the history of salvation. This prophecy became a reality in Jesus Christ and we are all part of its constant fulfillment.*

*R* – A proclamation from the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah

**The days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.**

**It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers the day I took them by the hand to lead them forth from the land of Egypt; for they broke my covenant, and I had to show myself their master, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with**

the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will place my law within them and write it upon their hearts. I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives how to know the Lord. All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the Lord, for I will forgive their evildoing and remember their sin no more.

The Word of the Lord!  
**All**—Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm Ps 51

**R**—Create a clean heart in me, O God!

R. M. Velez



\* Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness; in the greatness of your compassion wipe out my offense. Thoroughly wash me from my guilt and of my sin cleanse me. **R.**

\* A clean heart create for me, O God, and a steadfast spirit renew within me. Cast me not out from your presence, and your Holy Spirit take not from me. **R.**

\* Give me back the joy of your salvation, and a willing spirit sustain in me. I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners shall return to you. **R.**

2nd Reading Heb 5:7-9

Today the author of the letter to the Hebrews reminds us

that our salvation is the fruit of Christ's prayer, suffering, and obedience unto death. We enjoy his salvation in proportion to our obedience to him.

**R**—A proclamation from the Letter to the Hebrews

In the days when Christ Jesus was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the One who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.

Son though he was, Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered. And when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

The Word of the Lord!  
**All**—Thanks be to God!

Verse before the Gospel

**All**—(Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!)

Whoever serves me must follow me, says the Lord; and where I am, there also will my servant be.

(Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, King of endless glory!)

Gospel Jn 12:20-33

The death of Christ was not an unexpected regrettable "accident," but a vital moment in the overall plan of salvation. Jesus accepted it in full freedom, knowing that the salvation of humankind depended on it.

**P**—The Lord be with you!

**All**—And with your spirit!

**P**—A proclamation from the holy Gospel according to John

**All**—Glory to you, O Lord!

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Pass-

over Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we would like to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me.

I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus answered and said, "This voice did not come for my sake but for yours. Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

The Gospel of the Lord!  
**All**—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Homily

Profession of Faith  
 (Nicene Creed)

**All**—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven

**GLOSSARY:** • **New Covenant:** The promise of a "new covenant" between God and His people is found in the book of Jeremiah, and is very important. The emphasis is on its "newness" and difference from the preceding one. This promise was realized in the person of Jesus Christ, was sealed with his blood, and is offered to all mankind. It is made effective by the Holy Spirit, and is continually renewed in the Eucharist. • **Greeks:** Literally, this word means inhabitants of Greece, a nation of southern Europe. But here it means converts from paganism to Judaism who spoke Greek, the "lingua franca" of those days. They worshipped the Lord though they did not belong to the Jewish race. • **Hour:** In the Gospel of St. John the word "hour" stands for the most important part in the life and mission of Jesus, particularly the series of tragic events which culminated in his redeeming death. • **The Father:** This is the title frequently used by Jesus to speak of God. It reveals the unique relationship that binds him to God, who is his father in a proper and exclusive manner. We are "adopted children of the Father," thanks to our union with Jesus, our "kuya." • **Lifted up:** This expression indicates primarily Jesus' crucifixion. But some commentators also see in this a reference to his resurrection/ascension.

and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen!

### Prayer of the Faithful

**P** –Gathered together to celebrate Christ’s love unto death for all of us, let us submit to him the needs and intentions of all mankind, saying:

**All—Lord Jesus, hear our prayer!**

**C** –For all the members of the Church, scattered throughout the world: May they be credible witnesses of the Father’s love for every human being. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For the Holy Father, our bishop, and parish priests: May they bravely persevere in their service, even in the face of disappointments and difficulties of all sorts. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For those who are undergoing persecution for the sake of

the Kingdom: May they remain faithful to their commitment to what is just and right. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For social workers and all those involved in public service: May they feel the support of the rest of the community in their efforts to form a better society. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –For those among us who are discouraged or afflicted in whatever way: May they unite their sufferings to those of our crucified Lord. Let us pray! **R.**

**C** –Let us pray in silence for our personal intentions. (*Pause*)  
Let us pray! **R.**

**P** –Lord Jesus, you sealed the New Covenant through your death on the Cross. Grant us the strength and the faith that we need to endure all trials in union with you till the end of our lives. You who live and reign for ever and ever.

**All—Amen!**



### Preparation of the Gifts

**P** –Pray, brethren . . .

**All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

### Prayer over the Offerings

**P** –Hear us, almighty God, and, having instilled in your servants the teachings of the Christian faith, graciously purify them by the working of this sacrifice.

Through Christ our Lord.

**All—Amen!**

### Preface of Lent II

**P** –The Lord be with you!

**All—And with your spirit!**

**P** –Lift up your hearts!

**All—We lift them up to the Lord!**

**P** –Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

**All—It is right and just!**

**P** –It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give

you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you have given your children a sacred time for the renewing and purifying of their hearts, that, freed from disordered affections, they may so deal with the things of this passing world as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure.

And so, with all the Angels and Saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

**All—Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

### Memorial Acclamation

**P** –The mystery of faith!

**All—When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again!**



**All—Our Father . . .**

**P** –Deliver us, Lord . . .

**All—For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever!**

### Sign of Peace

### Breaking of the Bread

**All—Lamb of God . . .**

### Communion

**P** –Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the Supper of the Lamb.

**All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

### Communion Antiphon

(*To be recited only when no Communion Hymn is sung.*)

**Amen, Amen I say to you: Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains a single grain. But if it dies, it bears much fruit.**

### Prayer after Communion

**P** –We pray, almighty God, that we may always be counted among the members of Christ, in whose Body and Blood we have communion.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**All**–Amen!



**P** –The Lord be with you.

**All**–And with your spirit!

**P** –Bow your heads and pray for God’s blessing. *(Pause)* Bless, O Lord, your people, who long for the gift of your mercy, and grant that what, at your prompting, they desire they may receive by your generous gift.

Through Christ our Lord.

**All**–Amen!

**P** –May almighty God bless you: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

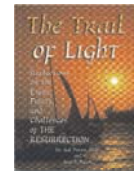
**All**–Amen!

**P** –Go in peace, glorifying the

Lord by your life.

**All**–Thanks be to God!

Did you know that the Via Lucis (Trail of Light) is a favorite devotion of St. John Paul II?



## The Trail of Light

A sequel to “The Way of the Cross” to help us realize the importance of the Resurrection in our spiritual life

# “Unless the Grain of Wheat Falls to the Ground and Dies...”

Valuable items have a high price. Important achievements are the crowning of courage, determination, effort, and perseverance. Medals, whether gained in sports, civil service or war time, are never a formality. Behind that small piece of metal there lies a world of self-sacrifice and dedication.

**In our existence on earth, there is nothing more precious than our spiritual life.** Such a treasure initially comes to us as a gift from God – a “living gift” that has to be protected and developed.

**Our spiritual life** – the best part of our “selves” – is more like a seed than like a diamond. Every seed has immense (often unsuspected) potentialities: endless riches of colors, flowers, fruit, life . . . All this will come to light, the richness that is “within” will be made visible only if the seed undergoes the process of transformation which, in many aspects, is a form of “death.”

This “miracle,” in fact, will happen only if the shell opens up and rots away, and even the internal part is consumed and “disappears” in order for the tender shoot to sprout and grow to fullness.

**The best part of us is often wrapped in a shell of “ordinariness” and defects like wrong attachments to ourselves, other people or the material world; resentments, grudges, envy, lust, pride . . .** These defects are like fetters that cripple us and hamper the development of our personality and spiritual life.

If we really mean to attain a new life, or enjoy a fuller life, **we must rid ourselves of them with the help of God’s grace.**

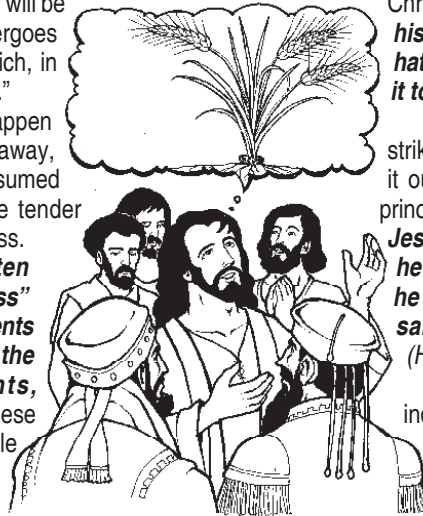
**This will be possible only on one condition: that we be ready to die and be transformed like a seed.**

The hard shell of selfishness must be opened wide and shattered to give way to a sincere concern for others. Layers of makeup and pretense have to be removed to reveal sincerity and truthfulness. Hotbeds of decay and moral corruption of all denominations have to be scraped in order to allow the roots of a new life to strike deep into our personalities and bear fruits of honesty, dedication, purity . . .

The “new life” will flower in us only at the cost of the death of our lower, sinful “selves.” This is the meaning of Christ’s saying, **“The man who loves his life loses it, while the man who hates his life in this world preserves it to life eternal”** (Jn 12:25).

Jesus did not just teach this as a striking, paradoxical theory. He lived it out, and paid the price which this principle entails. **“Son though he was, Jesus learned obedience from what he suffered; and when perfected, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him”** (Heb 5:8f).

That was a wonderful fruit indeed, sprouting from the seed of his life given for us. **We can share in it only if we accept to share in his self-offering and death.**



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