



25 March 2016

GOOD FRIDAY

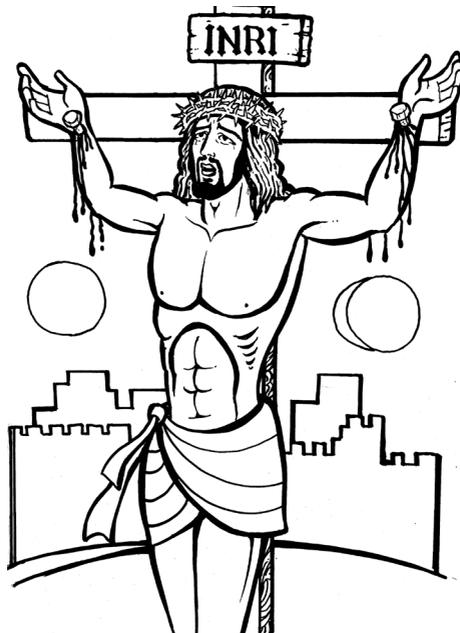
THE DEATH THAT GIVES LIFE TO THE WORLD

As we meditate on the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus, we realize all the destructive power of sin and Jesus' immense love for sinful mankind.

Sin wounds, kills, destroys! Sin does all these to us. It did all these to Jesus though he never committed even the slightest sin. Love, instead, heals, gives life, and builds up.

But love may cost a lot. It cost Jesus his dear life which he offered with supreme freedom and generosity so that all human beings might be freed from the devastation of sin.

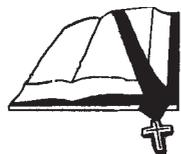
Let us participate in this commemoration of the Lord's Passion with hearts full of repentant and grateful love for him, and with the sincere determination to avoid sin at all costs. That will be the clearest sign of our appreciation for Christ's boundless love.



LITURGICAL NOTE

Good Friday is the only day in the Liturgical Year in which the Church does not celebrate the Eucharist. The reason for such an exception is the fact that this is a day of mourning for the death of the Lord Jesus while the Eucharist is always a celebration of his resurrection. The Church does not see fit to have any form of "celebration" while holding such a commemoration. That is why we have only a prayerful meditation on the sufferings of Jesus and the role that we have had in causing them through our sins.

Today's liturgical service is held in the afternoon, starting at about 3 o'clock, the time of the day when Jesus died. (See Mk 14:33.) It consists of three parts: (a) the Liturgy of the Word, (b) the Veneration of the Cross, and (c) the Communion Rite.

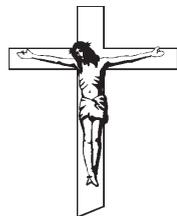


The **LITURGY OF THE WORD** is all about the redemptive suffering of the Messiah. This suffering of an innocent Victim had been foreseen by the prophet Isaiah in the mysterious figure of the "**Servant of Yahweh**" (First

Reading). His saving martyrdom was accepted by him as an act of **perfect obedience to the Father** (see

Second Reading) which was carried out in the most dramatic manner in the first "Good Friday" of history with the immolation of **the new and true Paschal Lamb** (the Gospel).

The **VERENERATION OF THE CROSS** originated in Jerusalem where people gathered on Calvary to venerate the Cross to which Jesus had been nailed and which, according to tradition, had been miraculously recovered at the time of Emperor Constantine. Eventually this devotion spread throughout the Church as a natural response to the reading of the Passion.



At the **COMMUNION RITE** the ciborium containing the hosts consecrated on Holy Thursday is brought to the altar now covered with a linen cloth.

The rite and the entire commemoration of the Passion ends with a prayer of blessing and no formal dismissal.

N.B. Today the celebrant wears **RED** vestments.



PART ONE

**LITURGY OF
THE WORD**



The priest goes to the altar. He prostrates himself or kneels in front of it. All pray silently for a while.

Then the priest goes to the chair with the ministers. He faces the people and, with hands joined, sings or says the following prayer.

P –Remember your mercies, O Lord, and with your eternal salvation sanctify your servants, for whom Christ your Son, by the shedding of his Blood, established the Paschal Mystery.

Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

All–Amen!

1st Reading *Is 52:13-53:12*

The prophet Isaiah spoke of the “Servant of Yahweh,” whose suffering would bring forgiveness to His people and whom God would exalt above all the great ones. This is a prophecy of the suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the obedient Servant of God and Redeemer of all mankind.

[This passage may be read by turns.]

Characters: **G**–God; **R¹**–Female Reader ; **R²**–Male Reader

R –A proclamation from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

G –See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted. Even as many were amazed at him – so marred was his look beyond human semblance, and his appearance beyond that of the sons of man – so shall he startle many nations. Be-

cause of him, kings shall stand speechless; for those who have not been told shall see, those who have not heard shall ponder it.

R¹ –Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

R² –He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth. There was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by people, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom people hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

R¹ –Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted.

R² –But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins. Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed.

R¹ –We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way; but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all.

R² –Though he was harshly treated, he submitted and opened not his mouth. Like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearers, he was silent and opened not his mouth.

R¹ –Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away, and who would have thought any more of his destiny? When he was cut off from the land of the living, and smitten for the sin of his people, a grave was assigned him among the wicked and a burial place with evildoers, though he had done no wrong nor spoken any falsehood. But the Lord was pleased to crush him in infirmity.

G –If my servant gives his life as an offering for sin, he shall see his descendants in a long life, and the will of the Lord shall be accomplished through him. Because of his affliction he shall see the light in fullness of days. Through his suffering, my servant shall justify

many, and their guilt he shall bear.

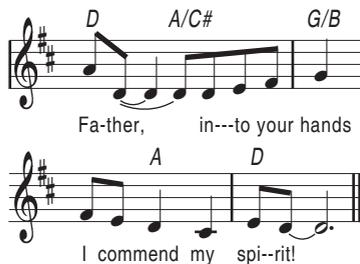
Therefore I will give him his portion among the great, and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty, because he surrendered himself to death and was counted among the wicked. And he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses.

The Word of the Lord!
All–Thanks be to God!

Responsorial Psalm *Ps 31*

R –Father, into your hands I commend my spirit!

R. M. Velez



* In you, O Lord, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame. In your justice rescue me. Into your hands I commend my spirit; you will redeem me, O Lord, O faithful God. **R.**

* For all my foes I am an object of reproach, a laughing-stock to my neighbors, and a dread to my friends; they who see me abroad flee from me. I am forgotten like the unre-remembered dead; I am like a dish that is broken. **R.**

* But my trust is in you, O Lord; I say, “You are my God.” In your hands is my destiny; rescue me from the clutches of my enemies and my persecutors. **R.**

* Let your face shine upon your servant; save me in your kindness. Take courage and be stouthearted, all you who hope in the Lord. **R.**

2nd Reading *Heb 4:14-16;*

5:7-9

Against the backdrop of the temple liturgy, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews presents Jesus Christ as the sinless High Priest. In such capacity, he has offered himself

as the spotless Victim and has thereby become the Mediator of the New Covenant.

R –A proclamation from the Letter to the Hebrews

Brothers and sisters:

Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without committing sin. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.

In the days when Christ 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, he 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!)

Christ became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every other name.

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

Gospel *Jn 18:1-19:42*

In his Passion narrative, St. John emphasizes Jesus' self-offering in obedience to the Father's plan. He is the new Paschal Lamb who fulfills the Old Testament prophecies, thereby becoming a source of salvation for all. The very moment of his crucifixion becomes his "exaltation."

N.B. The Passion narrative may be read by roles. When this is done, the short interventions of

the Narrators, such as "He said," "He replied," etc. should be omitted for a more spontaneous rendering.

Characters:

J—Jesus; **N¹**—Female Narrator; **N²**—Male Narrator; **P**—Pilate; **P†**—Peter; **C**—Crowd, Chief priests and other characters.

P—The Lord be with you!

All—And with your spirit!

P—The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John
All—Glory to you, O Lord!

N¹—Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. Judas, his betrayer, also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas got a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them,

J—Whom are you looking for?

N²—(They answered him,)

C—Jesus the Nazarene.

J—I AM.

N²—(He said to them.) Judas his betrayer was also with them. When he said to them, "I AM," they turned away and fell to the ground. So he again asked them,

J—Whom are you looking for?

N²—(They said,)

C—Jesus the Nazarene.

N²—(Jesus answered,)

J—I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.

N²—This was to fulfill what he had said, "I have not lost any of those you gave me."

N¹—Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter,

J—Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?

N¹—So the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish guards seized Jesus, bound him, and brought him to An-

nas first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews that it was better that one man should die rather than the people.

N²—Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Now the other disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus. But Peter stood at the gate outside. So the other disciple, the acquaintance of the high priest, went out and spoke to the gatekeeper and brought Peter in. Then the maid who was the gatekeeper said to Peter,

C—You are not one of this man's disciples, are you?

P†—I am not.

N¹—(He said.) Now the slaves and the guards were standing around a charcoal fire that they had made, because it was cold, and were warming themselves. Peter was also standing there keeping warm.

The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his doctrine. Jesus answered him,

J—I have spoken publicly to the world. I have always taught in a synagogue or in the temple area where all the Jews gather, and in secret I have said nothing. Why ask me? Ask those who heard me what I said to them. They know what I said.

N²—When he had said this, one of the temple guards standing there struck Jesus and said,

C—Is this the way you answer the high priest?

N²—(Jesus answered him,)

J—If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?

N¹—Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Simon Peter was standing near a charcoal fire, keeping warm. And they said to him,

C—You are not one of his disciples, are you?

N¹—(He denied it and said,)

P†—I am not!

N¹—One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the

one whose ear Peter had cut off, said,

C –Didn't I see you in the garden with him?

N¹ –Again, Peter denied it. And immediately the cock crowed.

N² –Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium. It was morning. And they themselves did not enter the praetorium, in order not to be defiled so that they could eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and said,

P –What charge do you bring against this man?

N² –(They answered and said to him,)

C –If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.

N² –(At this, Pilate said to them,)

P –Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law.

C –We do not have the right to execute anyone,

N¹ –The Jews answered him in order that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled that he said indicating the kind of death he would die.

So Pilate went back into the praetorium and summoned Jesus and said to him,

P –Are you the King of the Jews?

N¹ –(Jesus answered,)

J –*Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?*

N¹ –(Pilate answered,)

P –I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?

N¹ –(Jesus answered,)

J –*My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here.*

N¹ –(So Pilate said to him,)

P –Then you are a king?

N¹ –(Jesus answered,)

J –*You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world: to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.*

N¹ –(Pilate said to him,)

P –What is truth?

N² –When he had said this, he again went out to the Jews and said to them,

P –I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at Passover. Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?

N² –(They cried out again,)

C –Not this one but Barabbas!

N¹ –Now Barabbas was a revolutionary. Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. The soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head; they clothed him in a purple cloak, and came to him and said,

C –Hail, King of the Jews!

N¹ –And they struck him repeatedly. Once more Pilate went out and said to them,

P –Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him.

N² –So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And Pilate said to them,

P –Behold, the man!

N² –When the chief priests and the guards saw him, they cried out,

C –Crucify him, crucify him!

N² –(Pilate said to them,)

P –Take him yourselves and crucify him. I find no guilt in him.

N² –(The Jews answered,)

C –We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

N¹ –When Pilate heard this statement, he became even more afraid, and went back into the praetorium and said to Jesus,

P –Where are you from?

N¹ –Jesus did not answer him. So Pilate said to him,

P –Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?

N¹ –(Jesus answered him,)

J –*You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from above. For this reason the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.*

N² –Consequently, Pilate tried

to release Jesus; but the Jews cried out,

C –If you release him, you are not a friend of Caesar! Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.

N² –When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and seated him on the judge's bench in the place called Stone Pavement, in Hebrew, Gabbatha. It was preparation day for the Passover, and it was about noon. And he said to the Jews,

P –Behold your king!

N² –(They cried out,)

C –Take him away, take him away! Crucify him!

N² –(Pilate said to them,)

P –Shall I crucify your king?

N² –(The chief priests answered,)

C –We have no king but Caesar!

N¹ –Then Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and, carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle.

N² –Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, "*JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS.*"

Now many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate,

C –Do not write 'The King of the Jews,' but that he said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'

N² –(Pilate answered,)

P –What I have written, I have written.

N¹ –When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another,

C –Let's not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it will be,

N¹ –in order that the passage of Scripture might be fulfilled

that says: “*They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.*” This is what the soldiers did.

N²—Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved, he said to his mother,

J —*Woman, behold, your son!*

N²—Then he said to the disciple,

J —*Behold, your mother!*

N¹—And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

N¹—After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said,

J —*I thirst.*

N¹—There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and raised it to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said,

J —*It is finished!*

N¹—And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

(Pause. All kneel down in silence for a while.)

N²—Since it was Preparation Day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and that they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out.

N¹—An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may come to believe.

N²—For this happened so that the Scripture passage might be fulfilled: “*Not a bone of it will be broken.*” And again another passage says: “*They will look upon him whom they have pierced.*”

N¹—After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews,

asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body.

N²—Nicodemus, the one who had first come to Jesus at night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom.

N¹—Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish Preparation Day, for the tomb was close by.

The Gospel of the Lord!

All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Homily

Solemn Intercessions

The solemn intercessions are a response to the Liturgy of the Word. The deacon or lay minister stands at the lectern. With his hands joined, he sings or says the introduction in which each intention is stated. All kneel and pray silently for a while. Then the priest, with hands extended, sings or says the prayer at the chair or altar.

I. For Holy Church

L—Let us pray, dearly beloved, for the holy Church of God, that our God and Lord be pleased to give her peace, to guard her and to unite her throughout the whole world and grant that, leading our life in tranquility and quiet, we may glorify God the Father almighty.

(Prayer in silence.)

P—Almighty ever-living God, who in Christ revealed your glory to all the nations, watch over the works of your mercy, that your Church, spread throughout all the world, may persevere with steadfast faith in confessing your name. Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen!

II. For the Pope

L—Let us pray also for our most Holy Father Pope Francis, that our God and Lord, who chose him for the Order of Bishops, may keep him safe and unharmed for the Lord’s holy Church, to govern the holy People of God.
(Prayer in silence.)

P—Almighty ever-living God, by whose decree all things are founded, look with favor on our prayers and in your kindness protect the Pope chosen for us, that, under him, the Christian people, governed by you their maker, may grow in merit by reason of their faith. Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen!

III. For all orders and degrees of the Faithful

L—Let us pray also for our Bishop N., for all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons of the Church and for the whole of the faithful people.
(Prayer in silence.)

P—Almighty ever-living God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is sanctified and governed, hear our humble prayer for your ministers, that, by the gift of your grace, all may serve you faithfully. Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen!

IV. For catechumens

L—Let us pray also for (our) catechumens, that our God and Lord may open wide the ears of their inmost hearts and unlock the gates of his mercy, that, having received forgiveness of all their sins through the waters of rebirth, they, too, may be one with Christ Jesus our Lord.
(Prayer in silence.)

P—Almighty ever-living God, who make your Church ever fruitful with new offspring, increase the faith and understanding of (our) catechumens, that, reborn in the

font of Baptism, they may be added to the number of your adopted children. Through Christ our Lord.

All – Amen!

V. For the unity of Christians

L –Let us pray also for all our brothers and sisters who believe in Christ, that our God and Lord may be pleased, as they live the truth, to gather them together and keep them in his one Church.

(Prayer in silence.)

P –Almighty ever-living God, who gather what is scattered and keep together what you have gathered, look kindly on the flock of your Son, that those whom one Baptism has consecrated may be joined together by integrity of faith and united in the bond of charity. Through Christ our Lord.

All – Amen!

VI. For the Jewish people

L –Let us pray also for the Jewish people, to whom the Lord our God spoke first, that he may grant them to advance in love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant.

(Prayer in silence.)

P –Almighty ever-living God, who bestowed your promises on Abraham and his descendants, hear graciously the prayers of your Church, that the people you first made your own may attain the fullness of redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

All – Amen!

VII. For those who do not believe in Christ

L –Let us pray also for those who do not believe in Christ, that, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, they, too, may enter on the way of salvation.

(Prayer in silence.)

P –Almighty ever-living God, grant to those who do not confess Christ that, by walking before you with a sincere heart, they may find the truth and that we ourselves, being constant in

mutual love and striving to understand more fully the mystery of your life, may be made more perfect witnesses to your love in the world. Through Christ our Lord.

All – Amen!

VIII. For those who do not believe in God

L –Let us pray also for those who do not acknowledge God, that, following what is right in sincerity of heart, they may find the way to God himself.

(Prayer in silence.)

P –Almighty ever-living God, who created all people to seek you always by desiring you and, by finding you, come to rest, grant, we pray, that, despite every harmful obstacle, all may recognize the signs of your fatherly love and the witness of the good works done by those who believe in you, and so in gladness confess you, the one true God and Father of our human race. Through Christ our Lord.

All – Amen!

IX. For those in public office

L –Let us pray also for those in public office, that our God and Lord may direct their minds and hearts according to his will, for the true peace and freedom of all.

(Prayer in silence.)

P –Almighty ever-living God, in whose hand lies every human heart and the rights of peoples, look with favor, we pray, on those who govern with authority over us, that throughout the whole world, the prosperity of peoples, the assurance of peace, and freedom of religion may, through your gift, be made secure. Through Christ our Lord.

All – Amen!

X. For those in tribulation

L –Let us pray, dearly beloved, to God the Father almighty, that he may cleanse the world of all errors, banish disease, drive out hunger, un-

lock prisons, loosen fetters, granting to travelers safety, to pilgrims return, health to the sick, and salvation to the dying.

(Prayer in silence.)

P –Almighty ever-living God, comfort of mourners, strength of all who toil, may the prayers of those who cry out in any tribulation come before you, that all may rejoice, because in their hour of need, your mercy was at hand. Through Christ our Lord.

All – Amen!

PART TWO

VENERATION OF THE CROSS

A. UNVEILING OF THE CROSS



The unveiling of the Cross can be done either in the sanctuary or in the course of a procession that starts at the entrance of the church. If it is done in the sanctuary, the priest remains there and unveils the cross in three progressive stages, proclaiming at every stage: “Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world!” And the congregation responds: “Come, let us adore!” and all kneel down in silent adoration.

If the unveiling is done during the procession to the sanctuary, the celebrant unveils the Cross progressively first at the entrance of the church, then in the middle of the church, and finally at the entrance of the sanctuary. At every progressive unveiling and elevation he sings:

P –Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world!

All – Come, let us adore!

At every stage all kneel down in silent prayer.

B. HOMAGE TO THE CROSS

After the unveiling, the priest, clergy and faithful approach to venerate the Cross in a kind of procession. Before reaching the Cross, they either kneel or bow, then they kiss the Cross and go back to their seats to pray silently.

Hymns sung during the Veneration of the Cross

While the Veneration of the Cross is taking place, two groups or choirs (indicated by C¹ and C²) can recite or sing the following texts.

It is suggested that C¹ be only female voices and C² only male voices.

Psalm 66:2

Antiphon

C¹— We adore your Cross,
O Lord!

C²— We praise and glorify
your holy Resurrection,
for behold, because of
the wood of a tree, joy has
come to the whole world!

Verse

C^{1/2}—May God have mercy on
us and bless us; may he
let his face shed its light
upon us, and have mercy
on us. (Repeat Antiphon)

Reproaches

In the Reproaches, in addition to the two choirs, two cantors may sing some of the verses.

1&2: My people, what have I
done to you?
Or how have I grieved
you? Answer me!

1: Because I led you out of
the land of Egypt,
you have prepared a
Cross for your Savior.

Refrain:

1: Hagios o Theos,

2: Holy is God,

1: Hagios Ischyros,

2: Holy and Mighty,

1: Hagios Athanatos, elei-
son himas.

2: Holy and Immortal One,
have mercy on us.

1&2: Because I led you out
through the desert forty
years and fed you with
manna and brought you

into a land of plenty,
you have prepared a
Cross for your Savior.
(Repeat Refrain)

1&2: What more should I
have done for you and
have not done? Indeed, I
planted you as my most
beautiful chosen vine
and you have turned
very bitter for me, for
in my thirst you gave
me vinegar to drink and
with a lance you pierced
your Savior's side.
(Repeat Refrain)

PART THREE

HOLY COMMUNION



After the ciborium has been brought to the altar, the priest celebrant introduces the Lord's Prayer in the following or similar words:

P —At the savior's command
and formed by divine
teaching, we dare to say:

All—Our Father . . .

P —Deliver us, Lord . . .

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

(The "Lamb of God" is omitted.)

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 un-
der my roof, but only say
the word and my soul
shall be healed.

Prayer after Communion

P —Almighty ever-living
God, who have restored us to
life by the blessed Death and

Resurrection of your Christ,
preserve in us the work of
your mercy, that, by partak-
ing of this mystery, we may
have a life unceasingly de-
voted to you.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen!

CONCLUDING RITES

The priest faces the people,
extends his hands toward them,
and says the following prayer:

Prayer over the People

P —May abundant blessing,
O Lord, we pray, descend
upon your people, who have
honored the Death of your
Son in the hope of their res-
urrection: may pardon come,
comfort be given, holy faith
increase, and everlasting re-
demption be made secure.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen!

N.B. • Today there is no bless-
ing and no formal dismissal. All
depart in silence.

• Today and tomorrow, un-
til the solemn Paschal Vigil, we
genueflect before the Cross.

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Who's Responsible for the Death of Christ?

Who is to be blamed or who is responsible for the death of Christ, really? The question is clear and the answer seems easy, for we can readily submit a list of people who can unquestionably be held responsible for what happened to Jesus.

The first on the list, of course, are the **Jewish authorities** who repeatedly plotted to “destroy” Jesus. They were the High Priest Caiaphas, the Sadducees (who were the majority in the Sanhedrin) and a good number of Pharisees. They avidly grabbed the opportunity presented by Judas’ offer to deliver Jesus to them. They were the ones who arrested Jesus, sentenced him to death in the trial they held at night, pressed charges against him at Pilate’s tribunal, and worked up the mob to demand Jesus’ crucifixion.

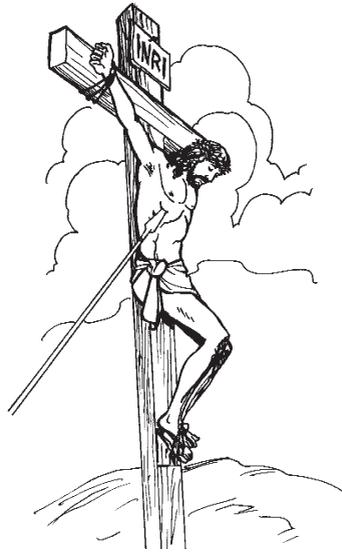
There is little one can say in their defense. They surely rejoiced and felt relieved in seeing nailed on the cross the carpenter-turned-preacher who had dared to challenge their authority and question their integrity.

The second on the line is **Judas Iscariot**, the disciple who betrayed his Master for a handful of silver coins. Disappointed in his expectation concerning the Messiah, he volunteered to hand Jesus over to his enemies. It is true that Judas deeply regretted his betrayal and even returned the money he got in the vain hope of convincing the religious authorities to stop their legal action. But his attempt was like trying to stop an avalanche. He himself succumbed in the foolish attempt. His name remains among those tainted with the blood of the innocent Christ.

Then there comes **Pilate**, the proud and ruthless Roman procurator who signed Jesus’ death sentence. It is true that he did that against his will and after having publicly dissociated himself from that crime. But it was his duty, as the representative of the imperial authority, to prevent it. In that, Pilate failed miserably, out of cowardice, and almost surely to avoid being himself investigated for several “irregularities” he had committed.

Closely associated with him, as a victim of the manipulation orchestrated by the religious authorities, is **the mob** that shouted the deadly slogan which frightened Pilate: “Crucify him!” It is probable that those making up the crowd did not fully understand the issue in question. Therefore, they might be classified as “accessories” to the crime.

Finally, we should list **the executioners**—those who carried out the sentence in its different stages.



But one might be tempted to almost acquit them since they were simple people who were just “doing their job,” and in those days being a “conscientious objector” was not a viable option. In centuries past, up to not so long ago, many singled out the Jewish people as a whole as the “killers of Jesus.” Such a terrible label has been the excuse that has enabled barbarous individuals, organizations and governments to harass and put to death millions of Jews, for the simple reason that they were Jews.

It is not fair to hold an entire nation or race responsible for a crime planned and carried out almost exclusively and single-handedly by its religious leaders two thousand years ago.

The Catholic hierarchy has recently dissociated itself most strongly from such unjust generalizations. In fact, a few years ago, the late Pope John Paul II has publicly asked forgiveness for the injustices and persecutions perpetrated by Christians and Christian leaders against the Jews.

Who then is responsible for the death of Christ? The answer to this searching question is that all those who commit sin are responsible for his death.

Just as Jesus’ person and life transcend the limits of the place and time in which he lived and encompass the whole world, so does his death. Hence, ***those responsible for it are not just the historical characters mentioned above, but also all sinners of all races and times. Jesus, in fact, died because of the sins of all mankind and in order to save all sinners.***



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