

SORROWFUL MYSTERIES

(Tuesday and Friday)

1. The Agony in the Garden

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch." He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will."

(Mark 14:32-36)



A presence which accompanies

Christians know that suffering cannot be eliminated, yet it can have meaning and become an act of love and entrustment into the hands of God who does not abandon us; in this way it can serve as a moment of growth in faith and love. By contemplating Christ's union with the Father even at the height of his sufferings on the cross, Christians learn to share in the same gaze of Jesus. . . . To those who suffer, God does not provide arguments which explain everything; rather, his response is that of an accompanying presence, a history of goodness which touches every story of suffering and opens up a ray of light.

(Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, nos. 56-57)

2. The Scouring at the Pillar

Pilate again said to them in reply, "Then what [do you want] me to do with [the man you call] the king of the Jews?" They shouted again, "Crucify him." Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" They only shouted the louder, "Crucify him." So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

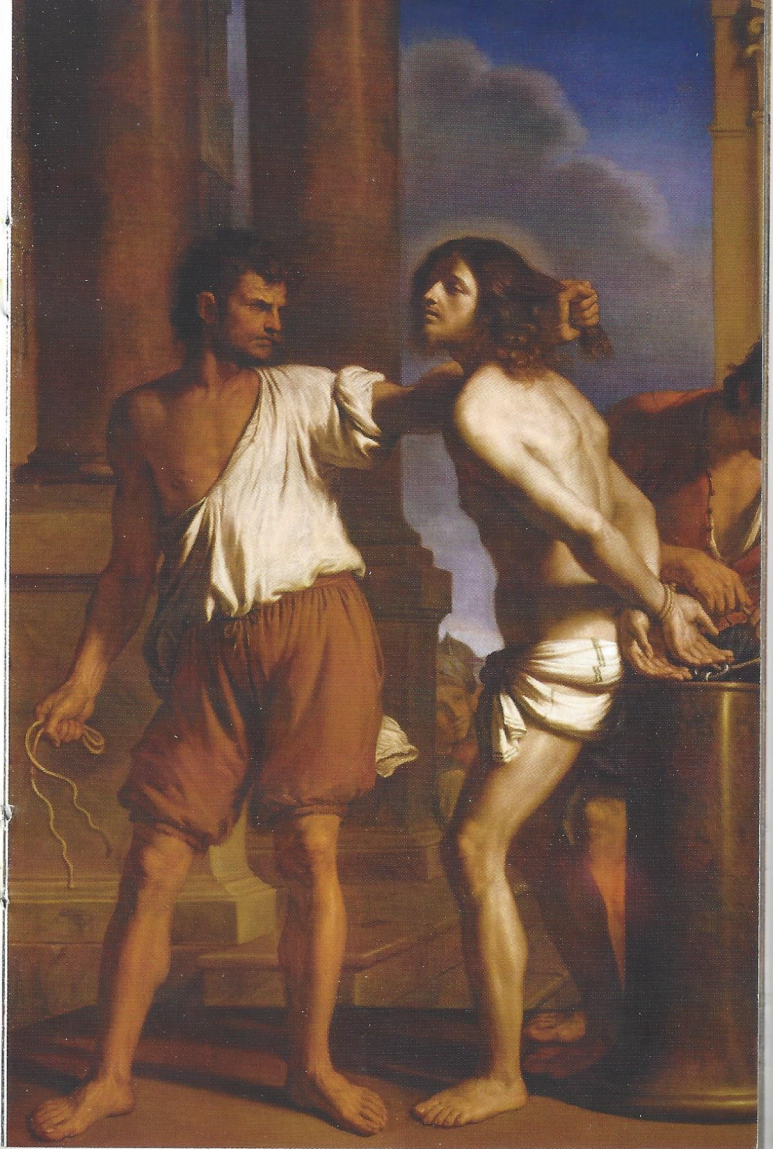
(Mark 15:12-15)



He gave himself for me

The Son of God offers himself to us, he puts his Body and his Blood into our hands, so as to be with us always, to dwell among us. And in the Garden of Olives, and likewise in the trial before Pilate, he puts up no resistance, he gives himself; he is the suffering Servant, foretold by Isaiah, who empties himself, even unto death. Jesus does not experience this love that leads to his sacrifice passively or as a fatal destiny. He does not of course conceal his deep human distress as he faces a violent death, but with absolute trust commends himself to the Father. Jesus gave himself up to death voluntarily in order to reciprocate the love of God the Father, in perfect union with his will, to demonstrate his love for us. On the Cross Jesus "loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). Each one of us can say: "he loved me and gave himself for me." Each one can say this "for me."

(Pope Francis, General Audience, March 27, 2013)



3. The Crowning with Thorns

The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort. They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him. They began to salute him with, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him. They knelt before him in homage.

(Mark 15:16-19)



A King who loves

Jesus does not enter the Holy City to receive the honors reserved to earthly kings, to the powerful, to rulers; he enters to be scourged, insulted and abused . . . He enters to receive a crown of thorns, a staff, a purple robe: his kingship becomes an object of derision. He enters to climb Calvary, carrying his burden of wood. . . . Jesus enters Jerusalem in order to die on the Cross. And it is precisely here that his kingship shines forth in godly fashion: his royal throne is the wood of the Cross! . . . The King whom we follow and who accompanies us is very special: he is a King who loves even to the Cross and who teaches us to serve and to love.

(Pope Francis, Homily, March 24, 2013)

4. The Carrying of the Cross

And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucify him. As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.

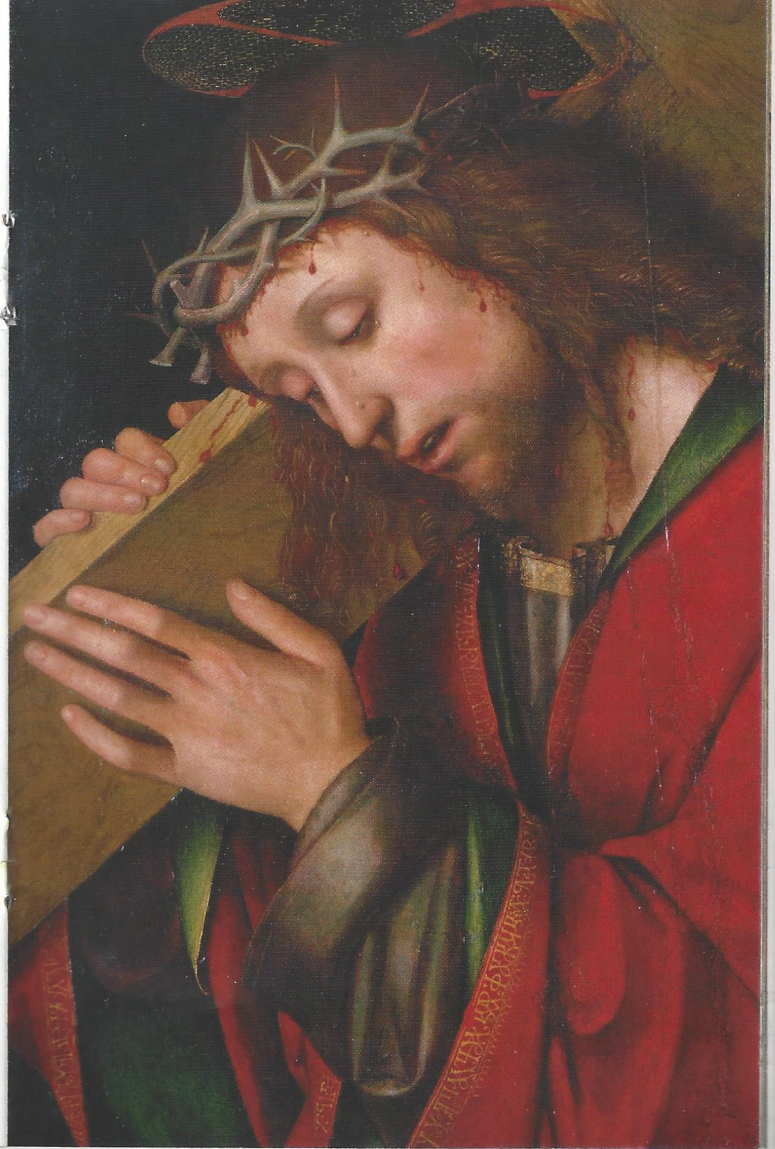
(Matthew 27:31-32)



Entering into the logic of the Cross

Following Jesus means learning to come out of ourselves . . . in order to go to meet others, to go toward the outskirts of existence, to be the first to take a step toward our brothers and our sisters, especially those who are the most distant, those who are forgotten, those who are most in need of understanding, comfort and help. . . . Living Holy Week means entering ever more deeply into the logic of God, into the logic of the Cross, which is not primarily that of suffering and death, but rather that of love and of the gift of self which brings life.

(Pope Francis, General Audience, March 27, 2013)



5. The Crucifixion and Death

It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.

(Luke 23:44-46)



The Cross of Christ, the Father's word of love

The Cross is the word through which God has responded to evil in the world. Sometimes it may seem as though God does not react to evil, as if he is silent. And yet, God has spoken, he has replied, and his answer is the Cross of Christ: a word which is love, mercy, forgiveness. It is also a judgment, namely that God, in judging us, loves us. Let us remember this: God judges us by loving us. If I embrace his love then I am saved, if I refuse it, then I am condemned, not by him, but my own self, because God never condemns, he only loves and saves. . . . Let us walk together along the Way of the Cross and let us do so carrying in our hearts this word of love and forgiveness. Let us go forward waiting for the Resurrection of Jesus, who loves us so much. He is all love!

(Pope Francis, *Way of the Cross at the Colosseum*,
March 29, 2013)