### **Readings for April 13, 2025 -- Palm Sunday of the Lord’s Passion**

‘ The Stones Will Cry Out’

### *As our Lenten journey winds down, we now accompany Jesus as he fulfills his mission, on his way to be “handed over.” What is in my heart this week as I stay with Jesus on the Cross, and contemplate his great act of love?*

### ***Note:*** *If groups wish to reflect on the Mass Gospel (The Passion of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, According to Luke), please read the account from your own Bibles (Luke 22: 14-23:56).*

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### **Opening Prayer: *Litany Prayer for Palm Sunday:***

***Response:*** *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

As Christ entered Jerusalem he was greeted as King and Messiah,

Let us adore him, and joyfully praise him:

***All: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.***

Hosanna to you, Son of David, King of the ages,

Hosanna to you, victor over death and the powers of darkness.

***All: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.***

You went up to Jerusalem to suffer and so enter into your glory,

lead your Church into the paschal feast of heaven.

***All: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.***

You made your cross the tree of life,

 give its fruit to those reborn in baptism.

***All: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.***

Savior of mankind, you came to save sinners,

 bring into your kingdom all who have faith, hope, and love.

***All: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.***

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#### **Gospel for the Procession with Palms – Gospel** **[LK 19:28-40](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/bible/luke/19%3A28)**

Jesus proceeded on his journey up to Jerusalem. As he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany

at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples.

He said, "Go into the village opposite you, and as you enter it you will find a colt tethered

on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here.

And if anyone should ask you, 'Why are you untying it?' you will answer,

'The Master has need of it.'" So those who had been sent went off

and found everything just as he had told them.

And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying this colt?"

They answered, "The Master has need of it." So they brought it to Jesus,

threw their cloaks over the colt, and helped Jesus to mount.

As he rode along, the people were spreading their cloaks on the road;

and now as he was approaching the slope of the Mount of Olives,

the whole multitude of his disciples began to praise God aloud with joy

for all the mighty deeds they had seen. They proclaimed:

"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest."

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples."

He said in reply, "I tell you, if they keep silent, the stones will cry out!"

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#### **Mass – Reading I****[IS 50:4-7](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/bible/Isaiah/50%3A7)**

The Lord GOD has given me a well-trained tongue,

that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them.

Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back.

I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;

my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.

The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not disgraced;

I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

#### **Responsorial Psalm****[PS 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24.](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/bible/Psalms/22%3A8)**

 **My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?**

All who see me scoff at me; they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:

"He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him,let him rescue him, if he loves him."

R. **My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?**

Indeed, many dogs surround me, a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;

They have pierced my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones.

R. **My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?**

They divide my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.

But you, O LORD, be not far from me; O my help, hasten to aid me.

R. **My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?**

I will proclaim your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:

"You who fear the LORD, praise him;

all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him; revere him, all you descendants of Israel!"

R. **My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?**

#### **Reading 2****[PHIL 2:6-11](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/bible/Philippians/2%3A6)**

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God

something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,

coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance,

he humbled himself, becoming 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 name, that at the name of Jesus

every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel during Mass - [**Lk 22:14—23:56**](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/luke/22?14)

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Related Reflections

For Ignatian Group – Do an imaginitive prayer on Veronica and the women, standing and ministering to Jesus on the Way to the Cross.

The Pharisees had to know they were powerless to stop the excitement of the people, so they called on Jesus to stop what they believed to be blasphemy. Jesus replied, “I tell you, ... if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” What did Jesus mean by this statement? Did He mean that the rocks would literally start shouting praises to the Lord? Most likely, no. The expression *the stones will cry out* seems to be proverbial and isn’t to be understood as a literal statement. The meaning seems to be that it is more likely that the impossible would happen than for the King of kings to enter His capital city without honor.

In saying that the stones will cry out, Jesus indicates that the people’s acclamations should be encouraged, not suppressed. The people of Jerusalem are expressing great joy, and that joy is so appropriate, so necessary, that, if they did not express praise, it would be appropriate for inanimate objects to fill the void. [Colossians 1:16](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col%201.16) says that all creation was made for God’s glory. Everything in creation declares His praise. However, humans are created in God’s image ([Genesis 1:27](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gen%201.27)), so we are the ones who should be praising God.

Shortly after Jesus’ triumphal entry, the people would keep quiet. And, by Friday, they would yell for Him to be crucified ([Luke 23:18–23](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke%2023.18%E2%80%9323)). The idea of rocks crying out in praise to the Lord is poetic, startling imagery. Throughout Scripture are similar poetic passages that present inanimate objects praising God. For example, in [Psalm 114:6](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20114.6), the mountains leap. [Isaiah 55:12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa%2055.12) says, “You will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and hills will burst into song before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands.” Throughout [Psalm 148](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20148), there are numerous examples of created things praising their Creator—the sun, moon, stars, heavens, water, sky, animals, and people. Everyone and everything was created for the pleasure of the sovereign Lord*. (Gotquestions.org)*

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**“I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.” —**[**Luke 19:40**](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Luke%2019.40)

There are many ways the Bible uses word pictures about rocks and stones. Rocks are symbolic of God’s character*and*of our character. In our reading today, Jesus talks about stones that will cry out. If we read this passage carefully, we’ll see that Jesus was riding a colt on a road coming down the Mount of Olives. It’s possible that Jesus pointed to stones along the road while he was talking, emphasizing how all of creation points to his power and authority.

If the religious leaders would not let Jesus’ followers to praise him, then even the creation itself would cry out. And in its own way, it already does! (See Psalm 19.)

Jesus may also be referring to the stones of the walls of Jerusalem. For as he approaches the city, he weeps over it and predicts that enemies will tear its walls down. This may be an echo of [Habakkuk 2:11-12](https://biblia.com/bible/niv/Hab%202.11-12), which says, “The stones of the wall will cry out. . . . Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by injustice.”

Jesus defended people who were powerless and oppressed, and he was declaring that one day his authority will be made known and the structures of oppressive societies will come crashing down. Then all of creation will join together to proclaim Jesus as Lord of all.

Julia Prins Vanderveen – todaydevotional.com

This is what happens when we allow Jesus into our lives - we will be full of praise and joy that we cannot contain! Even those with the coldest and hardest of hearts (like a heart of stone) will cry out the praises of the Lord for He is THAT good.

When we allow ourselves to be filled by Jesus, we will have inexplicable praise and joy! And when we experience this joy, don’t hold it back or stop yourself from expressing it. Don’t be afraid to praise the Lord with song and dance! Let no one stop you from praising and worshipping God with Joy.

<https://thecommandment.com/blogs/news/the-stones-will-cry-short-sermon-series>

**Following the Crucified Christ:** Whoever wishes to follow Christ in glory has to follow him in humiliation and in sorrow. For the humanity to which we belong, and in which the divine Word became incarnate, is a sinful humanity, which dwells in a world beset with evil. It is not possible to disregard this.

Only by accepting it, by confronting evil and struggling against sin, even to the cross and to death, do we share in the redemption, for our own personal profit, as well as well as for the good of all humankind… But above all, we must feel ourselves identified with the death of Jesus, in which he offered himself to the Father in expiation for the sin of the world, that we might thus be reborn with him to new life.

 - Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

**From Loyolapress.com - The Paschal Mystery in Everyday Life:**

When we look at the Paschal Mystery in the context of our religious beliefs and the life of Jesus Christ, we come to a deeper meaning of dying and rising. Jesus Christ’s passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension are the ultimate event of dying and rising, of death and new life. We learn from Jesus that new life can come from death, that we can find meaning in tough times, that there really is light in the darkness. We learn that all life has this rhythm of dying and rising and that God is with us in good times and in bad.

Christ’s experience of suffering, death, and new life has forever changed us and given us a different way of living. Death no longer has the last word. Plus, when we encounter tough times, we have the comfort of knowing that God has “been there, done that” and the power of hope that new life will come from death. Becoming conscious of our own dyings and risings helps us have a greater sense of compassion for others and a greater willingness to reach out.

Think about your own life. What is a dying or rising that you have experienced today, this week, this year? Reflect on that experience in light of Christ’s passion, death, Resurrection, and Ascension.

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**From Fr. James Martin:**

Suffering is not the last word. The message of the Passion is incomplete without Easter. The story is not simply of a man being brutally tortured, nailed to a cross and executed by Romans. It is the story of a man who turns himself fully over to the Father’s will, trusts that something new will come out of this offering, and receives the astonishing gift of new life. The message of Easter is not only the Christ is risen, not only that suffering is not the last word, not only that God gives new life, but this: Nothing is impossible with God.

A reflection to help as we focus on greater justice in our world:

**The Value of Suffering**

In times of suffering, we return to an awareness of our own human frailty. It is a place of humility, recognizing God as Creator, and ourselves as finite creatures within the larger reality. We, like the disciples, experience our limits. We are not in ultimate control. That is God’s domain. So, too, is the reason for suffering and the miracle of Resurrection in God’s domain.

Holy Week is a week of suffering. The Passion of Our Lord is suffering that connects him with us in our humanity in a very definitive way. Suffering may be a meeting place between God and ourselves. In suffering we grow in solidarity with Christ and with those he loves. His suffering is an icon of our own suffering, a window of opportunity that points us to our Creator.

God, who is infinite, reaches out in staggering humility to touch us in that pain. God, who took on human flesh, dies at the hands of those he came to enlighten. Accepting the humiliation, the betrayal, and the smallness of human minds, Jesus lives out his last days at the mercy of the merciless.

During Holy Week, our hearts meld with Christ in his passion and we walk humbly with all who presently suffer. As we recall this most precious event within the Christian tradition, we are called to enter more deeply into the reality of pain and persecution in our world. We also know the profound promise of a light that will not be overcome by deep shadows. Again, at this time in history, let us promise to live in that light so that sin and injustice will be overcome.

 *Prayer Time Cycle C: Reflections on the Sunday Gospels (*Renew International)

From U.S. Sen. John Lewis (1940-2020)

“Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year. It is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”

Discussion Questions

Looking at the reflection (“The Value of Suffering”), where have we (or as individuals) witnessed suffering this past year? When do I suffer or feel helpless in my own life? Can I see any value in this?

Does it help to know that Jesus understands my suffering, because of what he went through when he was with us in human form?

What gifts might suffering bring me? Can I see God touching, or meeting me in this suffering?

In what ways can I walk more intentionally with people who are suffering?

How did your prayer experience go for you during this Lenten season? Did you see your extra time with Jesus bearing good fruit? In what ways?

Thinking back on all the Scripture from these past weeks in Lent, what is one Gospel value that Jesus showed me that I most want to put into practice, or continue to pray with?

**Closing Prayer:**

Through your most holy passion and death, I beg of you, Lord, to grant me a most holy life, and a most complete death to all my vices and passions and self-love, and to grant me sight of your holy faith, hope and charity. *St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, S.J.*

**Also:**

God our Father, you know our suffering and our resurrections. You walk with us in times of despair and misunderstanding as you walked with Jesus to his betrayal and crucifixion. So many people in our world suffer the pain of persecution and alienation. During this sacred week, we ask that you open our hearts to those nearby who are suffering, even as we raise our eyes to Jesus on the cross. Give us the courage to step out and help them carry their burden in whatever way we can. Let us not overlook our chance to be in solidarity with you and to ease your load through our care for them. We pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.

From Prayer Time Cycle C, Renew International

**For reflection at home this week:**

Spend time with these thoughts during Holy Week:

Lord Jesus,

When I remember the great compassion you showed to others, even lepers, beggars and outcasts, I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 I want to say to you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When I read the Gospel accounts of how you fed and healed people, I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 I want to say to you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When I think of your power in raising Lazarus from the dead, I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 I want to say to you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When I think about the crowds cheering you with hosannas, I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 I want to say to you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When I contemplate how betrayed and humiliated you must have felt as you were handed over and tortured, I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I want to say to you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When I think of your forgiveness toward those who harmed you, I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 I want to say to you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When I think of the great love it took for you to die willingly on the cross, I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 I want to say to you, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When I think of how much you personally love me, I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I want to say to you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Speak with Jesus in your own words about your feelings and what’s in your heart:*