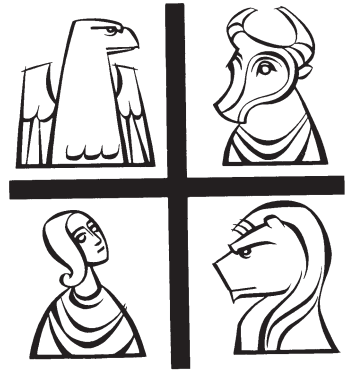


Reading Luke in Lent

Gospel of Luke 22:39 - 71



Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

39 And he came out and went, as was his custom,
to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him.
40 And when he came to the place, he said to them,
'Pray that you may not enter into temptation.'
41 And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed,
42 saying, 'Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me.
Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.'
43 And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him.
44 And being in agony he prayed more earnestly;
and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
45 And when he rose from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping for sorrow,
46 and he said to them,
'Why are you sleeping? Rise and pray that you may not enter into temptation.'

Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

47 While he was still speaking, there came a crowd, and the man called Judas,
one of the twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him,
48 but Jesus said to him,
'Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?'
49 And when those who were around him saw what would follow, they said,
'Lord, shall we strike with the sword?'
50 And one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.
51 But Jesus said,
'No more of this!' And he touched his ear and healed him.
52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders,
who had come out against him,
'Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?
53 When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me.
But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.'

Peter Denies Jesus

54 Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house,
and Peter was following at a distance.
55 And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together,
Peter sat down among them.
56 Then a servant girl, seeing him as he sat in the light and looking closely at him, said,
'This man also was with him.'
57 But he denied it, saying, 'Woman, I do not know him.'
58 And a little later someone else saw him and said, 'You also are one of them.'
But Peter said, 'Man, I am not.'
59 And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying,
'Certainly this man also was with him, for he too is a Galilean.'

60 But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are talking about.'
And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed.
61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.
And Peter remembered the saying of the Lord, how he had said to him,
'Before the rooster crows today, you will deny me three times.'
62 And he went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus Is Mocked

63 Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking him as they beat him.
64 They also blindfolded him and kept asking him,
'Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?'
65 And they said many other things against him, blaspheming him.

Jesus Before the Council

66 When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people gathered together,
both chief priests and scribes. And they led him away to their council, and they said,
67 'If you are the Christ, tell us.'
But he said to them,
'If I tell you, you will not believe,
68 and if I ask you, you will not answer.
69 But from now on the Son of Man shall be seated at the right hand of the power of God.'
70 So they all said, 'Are you the Son of God, then?'
And he said to them, 'You say that I am.'
71 Then they said,
'What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips.'

Reflection

The greatest shall become the least. In the passion we see Jesus brought low stage by stage. At the Mount of Olives he prays and speaks in words which recall the Lord's Prayer: to be led not into temptation and to that God's will be done. Jesus is then betrayed by a sign of friendship. He sees one of the apostles, Peter, also brought low as Jesus is denied three times. Peter, however, begins his path of reconciliation. Those who remember the words of Jesus understand them more deeply as we will see after the Resurrection. But for now Peter recognises his failing and weeps. Jesus is then mocked and beaten in a way that he prophesied when he spoke about the vineyard. Finally in this section he appears before the council who will not believe that he is the Christ, the Messiah and so take the opportunity, as they have desired since Jesus came to Jerusalem, to hand him to the state.

- Jesus' followers disappear for all their misplaced bravado when Jesus is arrested. Have there been times in your life when you have known that God never abandons us.

Prayer

O God of eternal glory,
you anointed Jesus, your servant, to bear our sins,
to encourage the weary,
to raise up and restore the fallen.

Keep before our eyes
the splendour of the paschal mystery of Christ,
and, by our sharing in the passion and resurrection,
seal our lives with the victorious sign
of his obedience and exaltation.

We ask this through Christ, our liberator from sin,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
holy and mighty God for ever and ever.

Amen.

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