

Holy Week 2020 – Monday - Reading

Matthew 26:69-75

Peter disowns Jesus

69 Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came to him. 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee,' she said. 70 But he denied it before them all. 'I don't know what you're talking about,' he said. 71 Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there, 'This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.' 72 He denied it again, with an oath: 'I don't know the man!' 73 After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, 'Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away.' 74 Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, 'I don't know the man!' Immediately a cock crowed. 75 Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: 'Before the cock crows, you will disown me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Holy Week 2020 – Monday - Reflection

There are always the observers
and the bystanders:
those who see all,
who take it in,
who watch, and wait
and weigh and measure.
There are those who
stay on the fringes,
who hang back,
don't get involved.
And then there are those
who pitch in:
those who, from the shadows,
want to be in on the action.
Those who perceive wrongdoing
and want to make things right.
"He was there"
"That's one of his friends"

Both offered as indictments,
not encouragement
To be identified
as one of Jesus of Nazareth's cohorts
was not a compliment
but a judgment,
a risky calling.
The women who served
had noticed.
Call it a woman's intuition.
Call it curiosity...
It was the women
who called Peter out
on his friendship and his loyalty.
It was the women
who confronted Peter
with his denial.
And Peter wept bitterly...

Holy Week 2020 – Tuesday - Reading

Matthew 27:15-23

15 Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. 16 At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. 17 So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, 'Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?' 18 For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him. 19 While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: 'Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.' 20 But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. 21 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' asked the governor. 'Barabbas,' they answered. 22 'What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' Pilate asked. They all answered, 'Crucify him!' 23 'Why? What crime has he committed?' asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify him!'

Holy Week 2020 – Tuesday - Reflection

A disturbing dream.
A persistent wife.
An indecisive man.
A government that wanted to show strength.
A fickle crowd that wanted blood.
All conspired to a fate sealed.
Crucify him!
And so Jesus, called the Messiah,
who had haunted the dreams
of Pilate's wife
bought the release of the notorious Barabbas
and signed his own death warrant.
How often are we besieged
by insidious voices

that come to us unbidden
and sway us into decisions
we might not ordinarily have made?
If only we had been given time
to consider the facts
and not been pressured
by the clamour and the noise
into irreversible action.
“Have nothing to do with that innocent man.”
And so Pilate washed his hands
and let the crowd decide.
And a woman's dream
helped to seal the fate
of our Lord.

Holy Week 2020 – Wednesday - Reading

Matthew 27:45-56

45 From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. 46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' (which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'). 47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, 'He's calling Elijah.' 48 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 49 The rest said, 'Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him.' 50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. 51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split 52 and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53 They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people. 54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!' 55 Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. 56 Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Holy Week 2020 – Wednesday - Reflection

Many women were there.
Women who had followed Jesus
ministering to him.
Some whose sons were travelling with Jesus.
Some who had known the power of Jesus' healing.
Some who were touched by his teaching.
Some whose lives had been transformed
by their encounter with the Son of God.
Looking on, from a distance,
they supported each other

They did not require
an earthquake
to be convinced
that this was the Son of God.
Not even resurrection.
But they were rewarded
by being the first to encounter
the Risen Christ.
Many women were there...

Holy Week 2020 – Thursday - Reading

Matthew 26:17-30

17 On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?' 18 He replied, 'Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, "The Teacher says: my appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house."' 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. 20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.' 22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, 'Surely you don't mean me, Lord?' 23 Jesus replied, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.' 25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, 'Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?' Jesus answered, 'You have said so.' 26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' 27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Holy Week 2020 – Thursday – Reading (continued)

Matthew 26:17-30

29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.' 30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Holy Week 2020 – Thursday - Reflection

One of us will betray you? You say it like it will only be one of us. You say it like it has not happened yet.

One of us will betray you?

Every one of us already has, I already have, so many times. Every day... several times a day... in all the time I've known you.

You chose me, but there are still moments when I wonder, have I chosen you?

You tell stories in the languages of farmers and landowners, but I want you to talk plainly and simply, like fishermen understand.

You heal, but I'm left embarrassed when I cannot follow your example. You can sleep through a storm and rein in the wind with a word, but I fear for my life when the waves are high. I

hang back when you speak out and you berate me when I try to protect you. You ask me to sit down and eat with my sworn enemies and I resent the

explanations demanded of me by the authorities. I protest when you ask me to feed a multitude and I'm shamed by the generosity of a child. Follow in your footsteps? You tread on water and I cower in the safety of the boat. An insistent foreign woman and a crowd of mothers crave your attention, but when I tell them to leave you alone, it is me you reject and them you embrace. I wade into the argument about greatness and you sit in the dirt playing with a child, saying here is greatness. I see the rich as blessed by their wealth and you say it will be hard for them to enter the Kingdom. One of us will betray you? Every one of us falls down in the face of your integrity, your courage, your example, your leading. One of us will betray you? You say it like it will only be one of us. You say it like it has not happened yet. Too good to be true, Lord, too good to be true.

Holy Week 2020 – Friday - Reading

Matthew 27:27-61

The soldiers mock Jesus

27 Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers round him. 28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. 'Hail, king of the Jews!' they said. 30 They spat on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 31 After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The crucifixion of Jesus

32 As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. 33 They came to a place called Golgotha (which means 'the place of the skull'). 34 There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. 35 When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 36 And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. 37 Above his head they placed the written charge against

Holy Week 2020 – Friday – Reading (continued 1)

him: this is Jesus, the king of the jews.

38 Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, ‘You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!’ 41 In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 42 ‘He saved others,’ they said, ‘but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, “I am the Son of God.”’ 44 In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

The death of Jesus

45 From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. 46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ (which means ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’).

Holy Week 2020 – Friday – Reading (continued 2)

47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, ‘He’s calling Elijah.’

48 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 49 The rest said, ‘Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.’

50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

51 At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split 52 and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. 53 They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and[c] went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

54 When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, ‘Surely he was the Son of God!’

Holy Week 2020 – Friday – Reading (continued 3)

55 Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. 56 Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph,^[d] and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

The burial of Jesus

57 As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. 58 Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. 59 Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

Holy Week 2020 – Friday - Reflection

He carried the cross
even as soldiers mocked and maimed him
and poured scorn as freely as his blood.
He carried the cross
even as Simon lifted it from his torn shoulders
and the crowd saw glint of bone.
He carried the cross
even as he hung in agony
and tasted the bitterness of wine and waging.
He carried the cross
even as the devil taunted and tested

and offered a way out.
He carried the cross
even as darkness cast its shadow
and the earth shook as if the dead walked upon it.
He carried the cross
even as women and warrior wept and wondered
at the waste.
He carries the cross
even as the world waits for all sin and sorrow to be
laid down
for all time.