



READINGS FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Hebrews 5: 7-9

While Christ lived on earth he prayed to God and asked God for help. God is the One who could save him from death, and Jesus prayed to God with loud cries and tears. And God answered Jesus' prayers because Jesus was humble and did everything God wanted. Jesus was the Son of God. But Jesus suffered and learned to obey by the things that he suffered. Then Jesus was perfect. And Jesus is the reason that all those people who obey him can have salvation forever.

John 12: 20-33

Some Greek people went to Jerusalem to worship at the Passover festival.

These Greek people went to Philip... They said, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus."

Philip went and told Andrew. Then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus.

Jesus said to them, "Now is the time for the Son of Man to receive his glory. I tell you the truth. A grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die. Then it grows and makes many seeds. But if it never dies, then it will always be only a single seed. The person that loves his own life will lose it. But the person that hates his life in this world will keep it. He will have life forever. The person that serves me must follow me. Then my servant will be with me everywhere I am. My Father will give honor to people that serve me.

"Now I am very troubled. What should I say? Should I say, 'Father save me from this time of suffering'? No, I came to this time so that I could suffer. Father, do

what will bring you glory!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have already brought glory to myself. I will do it again."

The people standing there heard the voice. Those people said it was thunder.

But other people said, "An angel spoke to Jesus!"

Jesus said to the people, "That voice was for you and not for me. Now is the time for the world to be judged. Now the ruler of this world (*the devil*) will be thrown out. I will be lifted up from the earth. And when this happens, I will bring all people to me." Jesus said this to show how he would die.

5 THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

IT IS HARD FOR US TO BELIEVE HOW MUCH GOD LOVES US. THE BIBLE FROM BEGINNING TO END IS THE STORY OF GOD'S WONDERFUL CONTINUING LOVE, AND OUR NOT UNDERSTANDING IT. JESUS LIVED, SUFFERED, DIED, AND ROSE FROM THE DEAD, ALL TO SHOW US THE FATHER'S LOVE.

Opening Prayer

Loving God, your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, accepted the cross. With his suffering, death, and Resurrection, we see your power to save. Fill us with your Spirit now. Help us understand and welcome your deep love for us. Give each of us a heart that wants to worship you faithfully. We ask this through our savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Should I Say, "Save Me from this Suffering"?

In three of the Gospels, Jesus prays to be relieved of his suffering. "Take this cup of suffering away from me. But don't do what I want, do what you want" (Mark 14:36). But in John's Gospel, Jesus does not say this. Instead he prays: "I am troubled now. What should I say? 'Father, save me from this time of suffering'? No, I came to this time so I could bring glory to your name, Father, and suffer." Why does John tell the story in this different way?

Remember, John is writing to people who want to see the Son of Man in glory. Remember, also, John always lets the risen Christ show through in his stories about Jesus. Here, Jesus seems to know everything, as if the Resurrection already happened. He accepts because he knows he will be giving glory to the Father's name.

To *glorify* the Father means more than giving praise and honor to the Father. To *glorify* means to show the divine (holy) life of God, to show who God really is. Through his passion, death, and Resurrection, through his being "lifted up" from the earth (meaning both in the Crucifixion and the Resurrection), the Son is glorifying the Father, and the Father is glorifying the Son. The Son is giving glory to the Father because the Son is showing the Father's love and power to save.

The Father is giving glory to the Son because, after the Resurrection, people will realize who Jesus is: Jesus is divine. He is God. John wants people to see that the Son of Man has come in glory.

Jesus Brings Salvation for All

The Letter to the Hebrews, like the gospels of Mark, Matthew, and Luke, shows Jesus suffering the same way any human person would suffer during agony (pain) and death. “While Christ lived on earth he prayed to God and asked God to save him from death, and Jesus prayed to God with loud cries and tears. God answered Jesus’ prayers because Jesus was humble and did everything God wanted.” How did God answer Jesus’ prayer? Jesus suffered terribly before his death on the cross. He did die and he was buried. But Jesus was saved from death; he did not stay dead. Jesus rose from death to eternal life.

Why was the cross necessary? This is a real mystery in Christianity. Couldn’t Christ have died peacefully in bed and still rise from the dead? The writer of Hebrews says that Jesus, in his human life, “learned to obey from the things he suffered. Then Jesus was made perfect. Jesus brings salvation for all who obey him.”

How was Jesus made perfect? The Letter to the Hebrews shows Jesus as a person who truly suffered. Through his suffering, Jesus experienced growth as a person, the same way each of us can grow through suffering. Through his suffering, Jesus grew as God’s Son, able to accept what his Father wanted.

What more can God do to show us we are loved? The greatest proof of God’s love is the salvation we receive in Jesus. When we

think and pray about God’s love, we gain strength. We only need to turn to Christ in love, accept forgiveness for our sins and walk in his path, to receive the gift of eternal life.

DISCIPLE IN MISSION: ARCHBISHOP OSCAR ROMERO

For years, the country of El Salvador suffered. A few people were very rich, but most of the people lived in terrible poverty. Those who worked for change were beaten, killed, or they disappeared. But a witness for the Gospel appeared, a “good shepherd” willing to sacrifice his life for this people.

During his three years as archbishop of San Salvador, Oscar Romero spoke strongly for justice. Then he too was killed. But he knew, if he was killed, he would continue to live in his people’s faith.

Romero was known for his strong faith, pure life, and deep personal holiness.

Oscar Romero was born in 1917 and entered the seminary

at age thirteen. He studied in Rome and was ordained in 1942. He returned to his native city of San Miguel and became a pastor, radio preacher, and editor of the Catholic paper. In 1972 he was ordained assistant bishop of San Salvador.

In 1974, Romero became bishop of a rural area. He saw the difficulties and injustices suffered by the poor. Then he became archbishop of San Salvador in 1977.

Romero was deeply influenced when several Salvadoran priests and religious teachers were murdered for defending poor people. Many people whose relatives and friends were killed came to him for

help. In response, he knew it was his responsibility to be the voice for the poor. He began to speak strongly against violence and begged for peace. His preaching was broadcast on the radio to the whole country - until a bomb destroyed the transmitter.

Romero’s enemies started to work against him. Knowing he would be killed, Romero forgave those who would murder him and offered his life for his people. On March 24, 1980, Archbishop Oscar Romero was shot to death. Chosen by God, he is for the church of the Americas and the church of the world a witness of faith and a martyr for social justice.

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. Do you believe it is possible to grow through suffering? Give an example of how this happened to you, or to someone you know.
2. Do you believe God loves every single person? Our political enemies? People of different religions? People with no religion? If God does love them, what does this mean about our relationships with these people?
3. Do you think we have any responsibility to spread the good news of God's love to people who don't know about it? Who do you think needs to receive this news? What can you or your community do to share the good news of God's love?

Ways to Take Action

1. Think of someone you know who isn't aware of God's love for them. Ask God to bring that person to Christ.
2. Think about your attitude toward other people. Do you love them as God loves them? Ask God for the grace to show love to them.
3. Remember a time when you grew through suffering. Thank Jesus for bringing you through that suffering to a deeper relationship with him and other people.
4. Celebrate God's forgiving love by going to confession this week.

Closing Prayer and Ritual



Gather around a table that has a plant on it, surrounded with small paper hearts.

First reader. Sometimes it's hard for us to realize God wants to be known and loved. Sometimes we don't realize God wants to forgive -- and even forget -- our sins. But God made a covenant (promise) with us. God put this promise deep in our hearts. Now all people can know the salvation God wants for every person in this world. Let us open our hearts to God's love.

Second reader: Give me a new heart, God.

All: Give me a new heart, God.

Second Reader: Make my heart new, God. Give me a strong spirit. Don't send me away from your presence. Let your Holy Spirit support me.

All: Give me a new heart, God.

First reader. God wants all people to experience his love for them. Think of someone you want to feel God's love.

When the group is ready, people come to the table one by one. Each person picks up a heart and asks God to bless a special person. Everyone takes a heart home and writes on it the name of the person they prayed for. Remember to continue praying for that person. End by Signing together the Our Father.



READINGS FOR PASSION SUNDAY

Psalm 22

My God, my God, why did you abandon*
me?

**My God, my God, why did you abandon
me?**

Many people see me.
They mock me and say,
“He depended on the Lord;
let God deliver him.
Let God save him if He really loves him.”

**My God, my God, why did you abandon
me?**

Truly, many evil people come to hurt me.
They crucify my hands and feet.
I can count all my bones.

**My God, my God, why did you abandon
me?**

They take my clothes, gamble for my
coat.
But you, Lord, stay with me; God, my help.

**My God, my God, why did you abandon
me?**

I proclaim Your name for my friends,
With all people I praise you.
“You who love the Lord, praise Him.
All children of God, give Him glory!”

**My God, my God, why did you abandon
me?**

* Abandon = being left alone; ignored

Philippians 2:6-11

Christ himself was like God in everything. Christ was equal with God. But Christ did not think that being equal with God was something that he must keep.

He gave up his place with God and agreed to be like a servant. He was born to be a man and became like a servant. And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself by being fully obedient to God. He obeyed even when that caused him to die. And he died on a cross.

Christ obeyed God, so God raised Christ to the most important place. God made the name of Christ greater than every other name. God did this because he wants every person to bow for the name of Jesus. Every person in heaven, on the earth, and under the earth will bow. Every person will confess, “Jesus Christ is Lord.” When they say this, it will bring glory to God the Father.

Mark 14:16b- 15:47

The followers prepared the Passover meal.

In the evening, Jesus went to that house with the twelve apostles. While they were all at the table eating, Jesus said, “I tell you the truth. One of you will be against me -- one of you eating with me now.”

The followers were very sad to hear this. Each follower said to Jesus, “Surely I will not be against you!”

Jesus answered, “The man who is against me is one of you twelve. He is the one who dips his bread into the same bowl with me. The Son of Man will go and die.

The Scriptures say this will happen. But it will be very bad for the person who gives the Son of Man to be killed. It would be better for that person if he were never born.” . . . After supper, Jesus and the followers went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus' Followers Will All Leave Him

Then Jesus told the followers, “You will all lose your faith. It is written in the Scriptures:

‘I will kill the shepherd,
and the sheep will run away.’

Zechuriah 13-7

But after I die, I will rise from death. Then I will go to Galilee. I will be there before you go there.”

Peter said, “All the other followers may lose their faith. But I will never lose my faith.”

Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth. Tonight you will say you don’t know me. You will say this three times before the rooster crows twice.”

But Peter answered strongly, “I will never say I don’t know you! I will even die with you!” And all the other followers said the same thing.

Jesus Prays Alone

Jesus and his followers went to a place named Gethsemane. Jesus said to the followers, “Sit here while I pray.” Jesus told Peter, James, and John to come with him. Then Jesus began to be very troubled and full of sorrow.

Jesus said to Peter, James, and John, “My soul is full of sorrow. My heart is breaking with sadness. Wait here and stay awake.”

Jesus walked a little more away from

them. Then Jesus fell to the ground and prayed. Jesus prayed that, if possible, he would not have this time of suffering. Jesus prayed, “Abba, Father! You can do all things. Let me not have this cup of suffering. But do what you want, not what I want.”

Then Jesus went back to his followers. He found them sleeping. He said to Peter, “Simon, why are you sleeping? You could not stay awake with me for one hour? Stay awake and pray for strength against temptation. Your spirit wants to do what is right. But your body is weak.”

Again Jesus went away and prayed the same thing. Then Jesus went back to the followers. Again Jesus found them sleeping. Their eyes were very tired. The followers did not know what they should say to Jesus.

After Jesus prayed a third time, he went back to his followers. Jesus said to them, “You are still sleeping and resting? That’s enough! The time has come for the Son of Man to be given to sinful people. Stand up! We must go. Here comes the man who is giving me to those people.”

Jesus Is Arrested

While Jesus was still speaking, Judas came there. He was one of the twelve apostles. Judas had many people with him. These people were sent from the leading priests, the teachers of the law, and the older Jewish leaders. These people with Judas had swords and clubs.

Judas planned to do something to show the people which man was Jesus. Judas said, “The man I kiss is Jesus. Arrest him and guard him while you lead him away.” So Judas went to Jesus and said, “Teacher!” Then Judas kissed Jesus. Then the men grabbed Jesus and arrested him.

Peter is Afraid to Say He Knows Jesus

The people who arrested Jesus led him to the house of the high priest. All the leading priests, the older Jewish leaders, and the teachers of the law were gathered there.

Peter followed Jesus, but he did not come near Jesus. Peter followed Jesus to the yard of the high priest's house. Peter went into the yard. Peter was sitting there with the guards. He was warming himself by their fire. . . .

A servant girl of the high priest came to Peter. The girl saw Peter warming himself at the fire. She looked closely at Peter. Then the girl said, "You were with Jesus, that man from Nazareth."

But Peter said that he was never with Jesus. He said, "I don't know or understand what you are talking about." Then Peter left and went to the entrance of the yard.

The servant girl saw Peter there. Again the girl said to the people who were standing there, "This man is one of those people that followed Jesus." Again Peter said that it was not true.

A short time later, some people were standing near Peter. The people said, "We know you are one of those people that followed Jesus. You are from Galilee, the same as Jesus."

Then Peter began to curse. He said strongly, "I promise to God that I don't know this man you are talking about!"

After Peter said this, the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered what Jesus told him: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will say three times that you don't know me." Then Peter was very sad and began to cry.

Governor Pilate Questions Jesus

Very early in the morning, the leading priests, the older Jewish leaders, the teachers of the law, and all the Jewish council decided what to do with Jesus. They tied Jesus and led him to Pilate, the governor. They gave Jesus to Pilate.

Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, that is right."

The leading priests accused Jesus of many things. So Pilate asked Jesus another question. Pilate said, "You can see that these people are accusing you of many things. Why don't you answer?"

But Jesus still did not answer. Pilate was very surprised at this.

Pilate Tries but Fails to Free Jesus

Every year at the Passover time the governor would free one person from the prison. He would free any person the people wanted him to free. At that time, there was a man named Barabbas in prison. He was in prison with the rebels. These rebels were guilty of murder during a riot. The people came to Pilate and asked him to free a prisoner like he always did.

Pilate asked the people, "Do you want me to free the king of the Jews?" Pilate knew that the leading priests had given Jesus to him because they were jealous of Jesus. But the leading priests persuaded the people to ask Pilate to free Barabbas, not Jesus.

Pilate asked the people again, "So what should I do with this man you call the king of the Jews?"

The people shouted, "Kill him on a cross!"

Pilate asked, “Why? What wrong has he done?”

But the people shouted louder and louder, “Kill him on a cross!”

Pilate wanted to please the people. So Pilate freed Barabbas for them. And Pilate told the soldiers to beat Jesus with whips. Then Pilate gave Jesus to the soldiers to be killed on a cross. . . .

The soldiers put a purple robe on Jesus. Then they used thorny weeds to make a crown. They put the crown of thorns on Jesus’ head. Then they called to Jesus. They said, “Hail, king of the Jews!” The soldiers hit Jesus on the head many times with a stick. They also spit on him. Then they teased Jesus by bowing on their knees and worshiping him. After they finished teasing Jesus, the soldiers took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led Jesus out of the palace to be killed on a cross.

Jesus Is Killed on a Cross

The soldiers led Jesus to the place called Golgotha. (Golgotha means “The Place of the Skull.”)

It was nine o’clock in the morning when they nailed Jesus to the cross. There was a sign with the charge against Jesus written on it. The sign said: “THE KING OF THE JEWS.” They also put two robbers on crosses beside Jesus. People walked by and said bad things to Jesus. They shook their heads and said, “You said you could destroy the temple and build it again in three days. So save yourself! Come down from that cross!”

The leading priests and the teachers of the law were also there. They teased Jesus the same as the other people did. The

robbers that were being killed on the crosses beside Jesus also said bad things to him.

Jesus Dies

At noon the whole country became dark. This darkness continued until three o’clock.

At three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, *lama sabachthani.*” This means, “My God, my God, why have you left me alone?” . . . Then Jesus cried with a loud voice and died.

When Jesus died, the curtain in the temple was torn into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom. The army officer that was standing there before the cross saw what happened when Jesus died. The officer said, “This man really was the Son of God!”

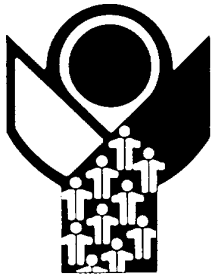
Some women were standing away from the cross, watching. Some of these women were Mary from the town of Magdala, Salome, and Mary the mother of James and Joses. These were the women that followed Jesus in Galilee and cared for him. Many other women were also there. These women had come with Jesus to Jerusalem.

Jesus Is Buried

This day was called Preparation day. (That means the day before the Sabbath day.)

It was becoming dark. A man named Joseph from Arimathea was brave enough to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus’ body. Joseph was an important member of the Jewish council. He was one of the people that wanted the kingdom of God to come. Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead. Pilate called the army

officer that guarded Jesus. Pilate asked the officer if Jesus was already dead. The officer told Pilate that Jesus was dead. So Pilate told Joseph he could have the body. Joseph bought some linen cloth. Joseph took the body from the cross and wrapped the body in the linen. Then Joseph put the body in a tomb (grave) that was dug in a wall of rock. Then Joseph closed the tomb by rolling a large stone to cover the entrance. Mary from Magdala and Mary the mother of Joseph saw the place where Jesus was put.



PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY

WHEN JESUS TELLS THE APOSTLES, “ONE OF YOU WILL BETRAY ME,” THEY RESPOND, “SURELY NOT ME?” THIS IS SAID AS A QUESTION. TODAY, PEOPLE BETRAY JESUS FOR VERY DIFFERENT REASONS AND WE ASK OURSELVES, “SURELY NOT ME?” BUT IN OUR HEARTS, TOO, THIS IS A QUESTION.

Opening Prayer

We are beginning Holy Week, Lord. We gather to reflect again about how much you love us. We come to you with our hearts wanting to be faithful to your love. Bless us in this holy time. Bring us closer to you. Help us see how to live as your people. We want to show your love to everyone we meet. We adore and love you, O Christ, and we praise you, because with your holy cross you saved the world. Amen.

Jesus Truly Suffered

Remember that Mark wrote his Gospel for Christians who were suffering persecution. They knew if they were faithful to their beliefs they risked being killed by their enemies, like Jesus was. This is why Mark emphasizes how much Jesus suffered. Mark wants his readers to feel connected with Jesus’ suffering.

As part of this suffering, Mark shows Jesus being betrayed, abandoned, mocked, or tortured by *everyone*. In Mark’s story of the Passion, no person or angel gives Jesus support or comfort. When Jesus asks Peter, James, and John to stay awake and pray with him, they can’t do it. Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss! Mark says the apostles “*all* left him and ran away.” One young man is so concerned to escape that he runs away naked. Jesus hoped his apostles would leave everything and follow him, not abandon him.

Peter was sure that his faith would continue strong. But he denies Jesus three times and says with anger, “I do not know this man.” Pilate sends Jesus to be crucified because he “wanted to please the crowd”. The *whole* group of soldiers mocks him and spits on him. The crowd hates him. Even those crucified with Jesus abuse him. Jesus’ sense of complete abandonment causes him to cry out, “My God, my God, why did you leave me alone?”

Some People Remain Faithful

After Jesus died, Mark lets us see the people who were faithful to Jesus. Only then do we see the women who followed Jesus and cared for him. We see Joseph of Arimathea, who had the courage to ask Pilate for Jesus' body. And we meet the Roman officer who says: "This man really was the Son of God!"

There were so many reasons that people abandoned Jesus, instead of being faithful: exhaustion, fear, wanting to please other people, thinking about their own pain. We know these reasons; maybe they cause us to abandon Jesus, too. When we read Mark's Passion, we also ask the question, "Surely not me?"

My God, My God, Why Did You Abandon Me?

When Mark shows Jesus in his suffering, crying out, "My God, my God, why have you left me alone?" Jesus is praying a psalm from his own religious tradition: Psalm 22. We read parts of this psalm today. Psalm 22 is a lament (a sad song or poem). A lament always begins with a cry to God, then a complaint. Then it changes to a prayer of trust, asks for help, and ends with praise. Even though the psalm writer is suffering terribly, he continues to be faithful to God. "I proclaim your name for my friends; with all people I praise you." To show Jesus crying out this way does not mean Jesus has lost faith. He is praying a lament.

Death on a Cross

Paul, in his Letter to the Philippians, quotes a song that celebrates the risen Christ as Lord. The Philippian people are experiencing persecution and are suffering. Paul, in his work for the Gospel, is also suffering.

He is writing to the Philippians from jail. Paul finds meaning in his own suffering and in the suffering of the Philippians. Their suffering brings them closer to Jesus, who also suffered.

The song starts with the truth that Jesus was God. But Jesus put aside his power and glory, and "became like a servant." He "humbled himself, becoming obedient, even when that caused him to die on a cross." Before this time, the cross was a symbol of shame. To die on a cross was to suffer the most terrible death. Only people who had done something so horrible that they lost all their rights were forced to die on a cross.

Jesus Christ is Lord

But the story does not end with death. Because Jesus was obedient and accepted death, God raised him up. Jesus rose from death, showing his own glory, his life as God. We, and every person in heaven and on earth, are called to proclaim our faith in Jesus Christ. Let us forget our tiredness, our fear, our wanting to please other people, our pride and thinking about our own lives – let us forget everything that causes us to abandon Jesus. Then, when Jesus says, "One of you will betray me," we will not have to ask, "Surely not me?"

DISCIPLE IN MISSION: DOROTHY DAY

Dorothy Day worked for justice. She did this by loving Christ and living the Gospel call for actions that improve the world.

Born in Brooklyn in 1897, Day searched for meaning for the first thirty years of her life. She became involved in justice work and was a writer for a justice newspaper in New York. She had a love affair that resulted in an abortion, and she had a marriage that lasted one year. Then in 1925 an atheist moved in with her. They had a daughter, Tamar. In 1927 Day became a Catholic, even though

it meant the man she loved would leave her.

During the Depression, Dorothy Day wanted to show that the Church was concerned about workers. She prayed for a guide. Peter Maurin, a philosopher and worker from France, appeared. Inspired by Maurin, Day started the Catholic Worker movement. She began *The Catholic Worker*, a penny newspaper that explained Catholic teaching about work and justice. With volunteers she opened a House of Hospitality, giving food and shelter to the poor and mentally

ill. She led peace demonstrations and established an information office for the poor.

Day taught that the works of mercy were to be lived personally and at a personal sacrifice. She was a friend to workers, the poor, street people, the sick, and the rejected. She dressed plainly and she lived simply with them. She also wrote, fasted, and marched for peace.

Dorothy died in 1980, but her work continues to live. There are now more than sixty Houses of Hospitality and *The Catholic Worker* newspaper still costs a penny.

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. When you read the many reasons a person might abandon Jesus, do you feel connected with any of them? Why do we abandon Jesus as individuals, as church communities, and as a country?
2. Do you think Jesus suffered in the same ways we do? Why or why not? Does Jesus' suffering give meaning to your suffering? Explain.
3. Some people continued to be faithful to Jesus through service, a courageous act, or by professing their faith. Have you seen people in your family, church, or community do this?
4. In a lament, the psalm writer complains to God before expressing trust and praise. Do you feel free to complain to God? Why or why not? Do you think this is a good thing to do? Why or why not?

Ways to Take Action

1. Read the Gospel for this week again. Think about which person in the story you are like. Are you like Peter? Pilate? The soldiers? Talk with God about what blocks you from being a faithful disciple. Ask for grace to continue to be faithful even in difficult times.
2. Go to church on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. Take someone with you. During each of the liturgies ask Jesus to help you and that person be open to receive his blessing.
3. Take time this week to think about the choices you make. What do they show about your being a follower of Jesus?

Closing Prayer and Ritual



Gather around a table with a crucifix on it.

Reader: Jesus said: "No one has greater love than this, to sacrifice one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13-14). That is what Jesus did for us. Let us tell the Lord we want to be his true friends. We want to be friends who are faithful even during difficult times.

Leader: Jesus says, "One of you will betray me." Like the first disciples we may ask, "Surely not me?" But sometimes we let fear, tiredness, or selfishness block us from giving Jesus our faithful love. Let us proclaim our faith in the Lord Jesus. Let us accept the cross, the same as Jesus accepted his cross. Let us ask for grace to be true disciples.

The leader picks up the crucifix and prays quietly. Then the leader Signs: "Lord, sometimes it's hard for me to be faithful. Sometimes I _____. Please help me become your faithful friend."

The leader kisses the crucifix and gives it to another person.

All: Praise you, Lord Jesus Christ!

Continue until everyone has prayed to become a faithful follower. After each person's prayer, all Sign: Praise you, Lord Jesus Christ!

End with the leader inviting all to Sign the prayer Jesus taught us: Our Father ...