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These short reflections for each day of Holy Week, put together by Sr. Margaret Malone of the Good Samaritan Sisters in Australia, may help us in our current isolation. This most important time of the year for us, Holy Week and Easter, is not cancelled just because it cannot be celebrated together in our churches. It is to be celebrated in our homes and hearts.

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

Look Your King comes to you

Gospel text : Matthew 21:1-11

Passing from one divine feast to another
from palms and branches.
Let us now make haste O faithful,
to the solemn and saving celebration of Christ's passion.
Let us behold him undergo voluntary suffering for our sake,
and let us sing to him with thanksgiving a fitting hymn:
Fountain of tender mercy and haven of salvation,
O Lord glory to you.

Byzantine Vespers

[In Holy Week] we follow his very footsteps, from the triumphant entry into Jerusalem acclaimed by the crowd of his followers, to the loneliness of Golgotha where he is abandoned by almost everyone, even those he himself had chosen and for whom he gives his life... all seems lost... all is about to begin.

Glenstal Bible Missal

It is ourselves that we must spread under Christ's feet, not coats or lifeless branches or shoots of trees, matter which wastes away and delights the eye only for a few brief hours. But we have clothed ourselves with Christ's grace, with the whole Christ – "for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" - so let us spread ourselves like coats under his feet.

St Andrew of Crete, Office of Readings for Palm Sunday

In regard to the different passion narratives - (Passion Sunday - Matthew's account; Good Friday - John's account) ... it is important that some see the head bowed in dejection, while still others perceive the title on the cross the proclamation of a reigning king.

Raymond Brown, A Crucified Christ in Holy Week

Journeys

A journey of conversion and transformation as we seek God

A journey of Lent to Easter in the Rule (RB 49)

A journey from Egypt to the promised Land in Exodus

A journey through the Lenten Sunday Gospels

A journey from the triumphant entry to Jerusalem to the loneliness of Golgotha

A journey through the suffering and death of Jesus to the Resurrection

During the week you may wish to focus on the idea of Journeys –
the journey of these Holy Week days and your own journey

Think of the Rule.

As Sr Aquinata reminds us that the first word of the Rule is *obsculta* - **listen**
and the last word is *pervenies* – **you shall arrive**.

The Prologue describes a call to journey as disciples with Christ to the kingdom.

In our hope filled journey towards our Lord we look forward with joy to meeting
the one whose face we have sought with longing during the days of our existence.

Enzo Bianchi, *Words of Spirituality*

Monday of Holy Week

For the Day of My Burial

Gospel Text: John 12:1-11

Almighty God, grant that we who are constantly betrayed by our own weakness, may draw new life from the passion and death of your Only-begotten Son who lives and reigns forever and ever.

Prayer for Monday of Holy Week – Office of Readings.

In view of Jesus' own inexorable movement towards death, Mary's loving service is totally appropriate. Jesus has given life to her brother at what will soon be the cost of his own life. By anointing his feet with costly ointment Mary shows both that she appreciates the cost and that she is ready to offer something costly in return. The mercenary protest of Judas that Jesus instantly rebuts, highlights the extravagance of her action and the appropriateness at this time. Judas' concern for the poor is hypocritical and false.

Brendan Byrne, *Life Abounding*. p 202

When we think about the passion and death of Jesus... we are meditating on the mystery of God, for here we believe the ultimate reality is revealed at its deepest level. And what we learn about the reality is both shattering and strengthening.

John Macquarrie, *The Humility of God*

Jesus has hinted at the prospect of treachery before (Jn6:70). Now it will penetrate the intimacy of the shared meal as one of the Twelve becomes Satan's tool to bring Jesus down. Nonetheless in a supreme display of divine love, Judas the betrayer will have his feet washed along with the others.

Brendan Byrne, *Life Abounding*. p 229

Impotent to bring about conversion, divine love is at its most vulnerable here and yet is not withdrawn. Judas along with the others will be "loved to the end"

Brendan Byrne, *Life Abounding*. p 235

Daily and hourly till the soil of the heart with the Gospel plough.

Cassian

Do not forget to eat your bread or your heart will wither.

St Bernard

Cardinal Newman took as his motto the phrase heart speaks to heart. Regarding God's word, the most powerful communication takes place at the level of the heart, not just with the exchange of words and phrases.

Paul Philibert, *Seeing and Believing*

Tuesday of Holy Week

Before the Cock crows you will have disowned me three times

Gospel Text: John 13:21-33, 36-38

Jesus knows whom he has chosen: these disciples whose feet he has washed who have received the piece of bread, and who will turn against him. The cruel reality of their turning against him, their lifting their heel against their host, alters nothing. He will send them forth as his representatives and as representatives of the Father.

Despite their ignorance, failure, betrayals and denials, the disciples are to imitate Jesus, loving one another as he has loved them, so that the world might recognize them as disciples and sent ones of Jesus Christ.

Frank Moloney, *Love in the Gospel of John* p 116

Look down , we beseech you, Lord, on your family, for whose sake our Lord Jesus Christ did not hesitate to be betrayed in to hands of the wicked and to undergo the torment of the cross.

Roman Rite

Jesus said to Judas “do quickly what you are going to do”...

Judas immediately went out. And it was night.

John 13:30

Your confession of love must be proclaimed three times because your presumption was three times dashed by fear. The knot you tied three times must as often be untied. Untie from love what you tied by fear. In spite of all, the Lord three times entrusted his sheep to St Peter.

Homily of St Augustine, Office of Readings, Vol 3 p 83

A community that has nothing to say about reconciliation has nothing to say.

David Armstrong

Wednesday of Holy Week

They paid him 30 pieces of silver

Gospel Text: Matthew 26:14-25

Even my bosom friend whom I trusted
Who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.

Psalm 40(41):9

Betrayal is at the heart of the passion of Christ for he was handed over by his disciple Judas. But the other disciples all betrayed him too, with the exception of the Beloved Disciple, his mother and the other women who were courageous enough to accompany him even to the cross.

Gregory Collins, *Meeting Christ in his Mysteries* p 186

Insults have broken my heart
So that I am in despair.
I looked for pity, but there was none;
And for comforters, but I found none.
They gave me poison for food,
And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

Psalm 69:20-21

Let your bearing towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus. For the divine nature was his from the first; yet he did not think to snatch equality with God, but made himself nothing assuming the nature of a slave. Bearing human likeness, revealed in human shape, he humbled himself, and in obedience accepted even death- death on a cross. Therefore God raised him to the heights and bestowed on him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow- in heaven anon earth and in the depths – and every tongue confess, Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11

None must doubt that God will fulfil his promises. For through toil comes rest; through death comes life. Jesus has taken upon his own shoulders all the weakness of our humility. If we are steadfast in our acknowledgement and love of him, in him we win the victory he won and the reward he has promised. To help us to do what he asks and endure our trials with patience, we must always have ringing in our ears these

St Leo the Great, *Office of Readings, Book 2* p121

The recognition of our earthly nature leads us to affirm our fundamental relationship with God as one of dependence.. we have nothing to contribute to the relationship except our own needs. Our deepest spiritual experience is to feel utterly dependent on God and to want to submit ourselves to the divine will.

Michael Casey, *Truthful Living*. p 31

So it is that we discover God in hard times. It is the realization of our own limitations that forces us to look beyond human resources for a solution to our discomfort. As Dom Helder Camara notes: "God is far less likely to abandon us in hardship, than in times of ease." The monk who has attained the twelfth step of humility is under no illusions. He is at home with his limitations and so he is content to number himself among those who rely on the mercy of God.

Michael Casey, *Truthful Living* p 82; 241

Thursday of Holy Week

This is my Body Given for you

Gospel Text: John 13:1-15

The Christian Passover will not be understood apart from keeping watch, waiting, anticipating. The paschal Triduum requires of us a liturgical piety that prods us to put everything else aside in the presence of the awesome mystery.

Peter Mazar, *Triduum Book 1*, p 13

Holy God source of all love,
On the night of his betrayal
Jesus gave his disciples a new commandment
To love one another as he loved them
Write this commandment in our hearts;
Give us the will to serve others
As he was servant of all
who gave his life and died for us.

Book of Common Worship, *Triduum Book 1*, p 25

In performing your ministry bear in mind that, as you share the one bread with your brothers and sisters, so you form one body with them. Show a sincere love for Christ's Mystical Body, God's holy people, and especially for the weak and the sick,. Be obedient to the commandment which the Lord gave to his apostles at the Last Supper, "Love one another as I also have loved you."

Triduum Book 1, p 35

'Do this in memory of me,' said Jesus after he had instituted the Eucharist. 'Copy what I have done' he said after the washing of the feet. Both commandments are directed to the same mystery; the commemoration of the Lord.

The washing of the feet had an unsuspected depth of meaning. When inspired by love, the least service rendered to one's neighbor takes on an extraordinary dimension; it foreshadows that total sacrifice for which everyone should be prepared; that full communion toward which we should all be moving.

Glenstal Bible Missal, p 191

Consider further that the Lord by reason of His excessive love was not content with merely teaching the word, but so as to transmit to us clearly and exactly the example of humility in the perfection of charity, girded himself and washed the feet of the disciples. Whom then will you wash? To whom will you minister?

St Basil

RB 35 shows the community of the Lord's service very concretely: Christ washes our feet and serves us, and we wash each other's feet and serve each other. It is Christ's love that unites us and makes us brothers and sisters. All this we cannot do without God's grace, but God helps us and consoles us, be it directly or through others.

Aquinata Bockmann, *Around the Monastic Table* p 129

Good Friday

Obedient Unto Death, even death on a cross

We worship you Lord

We venerate your cross

We praise your resurrection

Through your cross you brought joy to the world.

Roman Missal

There are three possible ways to react to the cross when it arrives in my life. I may deny its presence totally, although its harsh, unavoidable reality does not permit that reaction to endure for very long. I may fight it, kicking so hard against it that I injure myself all the more in doing so- and still I cannot make it go away, or I may stumble forward to venerate, embrace it and even kiss it – because on this wood I will meet the Saviour of the world. In the end that option is the only one that will allow me to live with the cross in my life and let it lead me into glory. Then only can the cross be transformed from a dark tree of torture into a radiant tree of light. Then only can it be elevated in my sight: when I learn to see it not just as an instrument of agony, but as the glorious tree of life that bore- and bears – the world's redemption.

Gregory Collins, *Meeting Christ in his Mysteries*, p 206

Holy Saturday

A Great Silence

Something strange is happening – there is great silence on earth today, a great silence and stillness. The whole earth keeps silence because the King is asleep. The earth trembled and is still because God has fallen asleep in the flesh and he has raised up all who have slept ever since the world began...

From an Ancient Homily for Holy Saturday
Full text see *Office of Readings* Vol 2, p 320

Every year on Great Saturday... we wait for the Easter night and the fullness of Paschal joy. We know that they are approaching - and yet how slowly is this approach, how long is this day! But is not the wonderful quiet of Great Saturday the symbol of our very life in this world? Are we not always in this "middle day" waiting for the Pascha of Christ, preparing ourselves for the day without evening of his kingdom?

Alexander Schmemmann

Easter Sunday

Alleluia!

The Lord is truly risen

Awake harp and lyre
so I can wake up the dawn
I will lift my voice
Sing of you, Lord, to all nations,
For your love fills the heavens
Your unfailing love the sky.

Psalm 108

Come then all you nations defiled by sin,
receive the forgiveness of sin.
For it is I who am your forgiveness,
the pasch of your salvation, the lamb slain for you;
It is I who am your ransom, your life, your resurrection,
your light, your salvation, your king.
I am bringing you to the heights of heaven.
I will show you the Father who is from all eternity,
I will raise you up with my right hand.

From the homily of Melito of Sardis