**Palm Sunday B**  **Lectionary Catechesis**

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**Guardian Angels Parish in Mead, CO**

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| Note that there is a gospel reading for the procession with palms, which may have a brief homily. The readings are the same for the cycles ABC, while the gospel Passion narrative cycles through Matthew, Mark and Luke according to the year. While some feel that the passion is long enough and pause “contemplatively” rather than sharing a homily with the people, this is arguably a mistake for three reasons: the contemplative reflection is too short to be contemplative, the readings themselves and the concept of emptying sacrifice could not be more appropriate for a culture of narcissism, and this would be a missed opportunity to call people into the liturgies of Holy Week. The practices of reconciliation form a scaffolding for the entire set of readings, and this provides an excellent lens through which to take this on and focus a homily. Sin, which precipitates all this should be addressed. Like ashes, Catholics love their palms! |

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 50, 4-7**

The “Suffering Servant Songs” of Isaiah are 42.1-4; 49,1-6; 50, 4-9; and 52, 12 -- 53, 13. In the prophetic tradition, this is the Messianic King, who because of his faithfulness and righteousness, will be rejected by the authorities who set themselves up in opposition to the will of God. Written during the Babylonian Exile, second Isaiah encourages the people to persevere through their sufferings; their leader will not be above, but with them. Some scholars understand the servant to be the whole of the people Israel, and not an individual person. Christian interpretation understands the servant to be Jesus.

**Vs. 4-10: CCC 713** The four Isaiah “Suffering Servant Songs” reveal the characteristics of the Messiah.

**Vs. 4: CCC 141** The Scripture is venerated as the body of our Lord is venerated by the Church.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why is Christ identified with the “Suffering Servant” of Isaiah?  How “well trained” are you in the knowledge of your faith? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why does a person who speaks the truths of the gospel get rejected by our culture?  When have you had to “set your face like flint” when in comes to your faith? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Do you use your words to speak uplifting words to the weary?  Do you share your faith when everyone around you is talking about apocalyptic doom and gloom? |
| **WORSHIP** | Do you trust that God is your help?  What is your response to suffering in this world? |

**First Reading**

**RESPONSORIAL: Psalm 22, 8-9. 17-18. 19-20. 23-24**

The psalmist gives us clues about ancient gestures of scorn to shame someone. Dogs, of course, would be a reference to any foreigner, and Israel was surrounded and conquered by some; they would have known well their wounds. They experienced the crippling of useless hands and feet. The third stanza returns us to the nakedness of Adam and Eve. Yet, despite all these things, the psalmist concludes with a cry of worship.

**CCC 304** This citation takes up the whole psalm, which identifies God as the primary cause of all that is, who acts in our history with providential care. “The prayer of the psalm is the great school of this trust.” God loves us.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | This psalm prophesizes about Jesus. Point out exactly the lines that do this.  Why did the Messiah, the Christ, have to be rejected, suffer, and die? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | Why is living one’s faith such a challenge for this culture?  What do you do when you feel abandoned by God? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | When was the last time you “proclaimed (God’s) name to your brethren?”  When in the assembly at Eucharist in what ways do your have “full and active participation?” |
| **WORSHIP** | What does it mean to you to “revere” God as the psalmist says?  How does your life give glory to God? |

**Responsorial Psalm**

**SECOND READING: Philipians 2, 6-11 Hymn to Jesus Christ**

Vs. 5 begins the call to this Hymn, “Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours In Christ Jesus.” An attitude is an orientation of the heart and mind. Among the qualities of Jesus remembered by the apostolic Church is His capacity to “self-empty,” or in Greek “kenosis”. Lent draws us into the humility of Jesus so that we in turn might learn how to be humble ourselves, and in being humble surrender our willfulness to the Father. This surrender is worship.

**Vss. 5-8: CCC 461** The Catechism affirms the connection between the incarnation and the mystery of the cross.

**Vs. 5: CCC 520, 1694, 2842** What Jesus does in emptying himself is our model. We become like this model only through the work of the Holy Spirit, and then the “unity of forgiveness becomes possible.”

**Vss. 6-11: CCC 2641, 2667** The psalms are the prayer book of the Bible and Church.They move us to worship. The cry of the blind men and this Christological hymn form the origins of the great Jesus Prayer.

**Vss. 6-9: CCC 1850 “Sin is an offense against God.”** We choose to become “like gods” and not with God.

**Vs. 6: CCC 449** Here the Trinity is professed; Jesus and the Father of the same “form”. Jesus rightly is LORD.

**Vs. 7: CCC 472, 602, 705, 713, 876, 1224** Jesus’ very humanity manifests his capacity to will to empty himself. We have been ransomed by His precious blood. (I Peter 1, 18-21) While we remain ourselves in the image and likeness of God, sin has disfigured us, and so we are deprived of the glory of God, restored by the resurrection. The character of all Church ministry is this service of self emptying, because we are never ministers of our own accord, but called by God. Ministry is never a personal possession or a territory in the parish.

**Vss. 8-9: CCC 908** We have the governance of free will like a king so that we might give our will to God.

**Vs. 8: CCC 411, 612, 623** The cup of the new covenant at the Last Supper is the cup in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus accepts the Father’s will; this is our same covenant with the Father. Jesus atones sin.

**Vss. 9-11: CCC 449, 2812** Jesus reveals both the name of the Father and the Holy Spirit because He is LORD.

**Vss. 9-10: CCC 434** Jesus is the name above all other names; the resurrection glorifies our Savior God.

**Vss. 10-11: CCC 201** The CCC blends this verse with Isaiah 45, 22-24.

**Vs. 10: 633, 635** Jesus descends into Hell to redeem the just men and women who lived before Him. He also destroys death itself by the resurrection. The second citation is a fragment of a Easter homily of the apostolic fathers.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is the Jesus Prayer?  How did God the Father “greatly exult” Jesus? |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | How does the obedience of Jesus atone for sin?  When do you have opportunities to empty yourself, if Jesus is to be our model? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | How do you find yourself using the name of Jesus?  In what way does this passage call us to evangelize? |
| **WORSHIP** | Why do Catholics genuflect in church, and why do we pray on our knees?  What other liturgical gesture do we use at the name of Jesus? Why are these important? |

**Second Reading**

**GOSPEL: Mark 14, 1 – 15, 47 The Passion Narrative**

Mark opens the passion narrative with the preparations for Passover and the Last Supper, during two betrayers are caught out, Judas and Peter. This follows with the agony in the garden and the arrest of Jesus. The Trial before the Sanhedrin and Pilate, broken by recounting the denial of Peter, and the mockery trial of the soldiers occupy 39 verses. The one verse way of the cross tells of Simon of Cyrene. In his typical swift style, Mark then quickly tells the crucifixion, death, and burial. The last person we see is Mary of Magdala, who then is the first person we meet again in the next verse which begins the resurrection narrative. Between 14, 32 and 15, 20 Jesus endures a series of “trials” by one person or group after the other in this gospel, and the execution of the judgments immediately follows. Imagine the judgments our own culture and world place dispense to Jesus.

**CH. 14, Vss. 12-25: CCC 1339** The Eucharist is a praise of thanksgiving to the Father for creation.

**Vss. 18-20: CCC 474** Jesus was fully God and human. By union with the Father, Jesus understood in his humanity the divine plan. But for example, he did not come to reveal the time of his return.

**Vs. 22: CCC 1328** The Eucharist’s many names enable us to plumb its depths and riches.

**Vs. 25: CCC 1335, 1403** The multiplication of the loaves prefigures the “superabundant” bread of the Eucharist. Jesus points to the reign of God in the Eucharist when he announces he will not drink the wine until it is all fulfilled.

**Vss. 26-30: CCC 474** Refer above.

**Vss. 33-34: CCC 1009** “Death is transformed by Christ” through his faithfulness and obedience.

**Vs. 36: CCC 473, 2701** The Church affirms the union of the Trinity when the human knowledge of Jesus is considered. He did not know “by himself” but “by its union with the Word.”

**Vs. 38: CCC 2849**

**Vss. 57-58: CCC 585** Jesus prophesy of the destruction of the temple is misunderstood and turned back on him before the Sanhedrin and by the soldiers at the cross.

**Vs. 61: CCC 443** Jesus declares himself to be the Son and challenge the Sanhedrin with this confession of faith. Jesus is more than the servants sent before, prophets.

**Ch. 15, Vs. 11: CCC 597** The trial of Jesus perplexes jurists even today, familiar with the confrontation of both Mosaic and Roman law. In any event, here the CCC affirms from Vatican II that the Jews are not to be charged with his crucifixion, nor accursed from the scriptural tradition.

**Vs. 34: CCC 603, 2605** Jesus’ cry of abandonment only affirms his union with the Father to whom he calls out. Jesus died to reconcile us with his Father. From the agony in the garden to his seven last words on the cross, Jesus shows us the unique relationship with the Father.

**Vs. 37: CCC 2605** Refer above.

**Vs. 39: CCC 444** The centurion expresses the Christian faith; only a true believer could make this statement.

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| **KNOW YOUR**  **FAITH** | Mark connects the Last Supper to the Crucifixion. Explain the Eucharistic/Thanksgiving quality of Jesus’ sacrifice.  How is death transformed by Christ? Review the kerygma and share where all this fits into the story the Church proclaims. |
| **LIVE YOUR**  **FAITH** | What is your judgment on Jesus? You have one, because in fact we are all implicated in his death on the cross.  What have you done in your moments of abandonment? |
| **SHARE YOUR FAITH** | Discuss the Church’s history and teaching about the Jews. What then is to be our relationship with Judaism?  Like Simon of Cyrene, what share of the burden of the cross do you carry? |
| **WORSHIP** | Describe the main crucifix in your parish church and the one in your home.  Vss. 22-26 shape the core of the Eucharistic Liturgy. What insights do you gain from Mark’s account here? |

**Gospel**

**Next Sunday: EASTER A B C: Acts 10, 34a. 37-43; Ps 118; Col 3, 1-4 or I Cor 5, 6b-8; Jn 20, 1-9**