

## HOLY CROSS AND ALL SAINTS MONDAY MISSION

### HOLY WEEK:

This week, we have entered the most important time in the whole Church year — Holy Week. It is the week when we remember the final days of Jesus' life on earth. We think about his love, his courage, and the amazing things he did to show us how much we matter to God. In Sunday's Gospel, we heard how Jesus entered Jerusalem and people welcomed him with palm branches and cheers. But as the week goes on, we follow Jesus through moments that are joyful, sad, and full of deep love. Holy Week invites us to walk closely with Jesus, to listen to him, and to prepare our hearts for the great celebration of Easter.

This is a special time for us to slow down, pray a little more, and try to be extra kind and thoughtful. Together, we can make this week a real journey with Jesus.



### THIS WEEK'S WORD:

#### The Passion of Our Lord Matthew 27:11-54

Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied.

When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus<sup>41</sup> Barabbas. 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?" For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

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."

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

"Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered.

"What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked.

They all answered, "Crucify him!"

"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!"

Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

#### The Soldiers Mock Jesus

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, 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. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. 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

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

Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads 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!" In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. "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. <sup>43</sup>He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

#### The Death of Jesus

From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. 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?").

When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

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. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

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

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

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!"

## REFLECT

Matthew leaves us in no doubt that Jesus is the saviour, the one promised by God. He quotes from scripture, emphasising that everything is happening for a reason. However, Jesus is not the saviour many have been expecting. Jesus is not going to lead a political revolution. He is a humble king, riding on a donkey. Jesus' triumph will show us a different way to use influence and power.

How does Jesus challenge our expectations? What do we value? When society judges people according to their money, power and status, are we able to find our own worth and those of the people around us in different ways? How honestly can we say that we don't just value people because of their looks or how their friendship makes us more popular?

Matthew portrays Jesus as the suffering servant who is obedient and faithful. Despite all the wrongs he endures, Jesus trusts in God the Father. How hard is it for us to trust God when things are going wrong? Have we ever felt pressured into denying our belief in God because of what other people might say? Where do we find the courage to cope with the difficult things we have to face in our own lives?

This is the most significant week in the Church's year. The Triduum (Maudy Thursday to Easter Sunday) is the highpoint. Jesus' resurrection is the foundation of Christianity and all our hope in the power of love. We know that whatever struggles and suffering we have to face, God is with us. Jesus rose and so we can enjoy the fullness of life!

## LET US PRAY

Dear Jesus,

This week we remember your journey of love. We think about your courage, your kindness, and the way you never stopped loving people, even when it was difficult.

As we hear the story of your Passion, help us to stay close to you. Help us to understand your love for everyone, especially those who are hurting or alone.

Give us gentle hearts, brave hearts, and hearts that choose kindness. Guide us through this Holy Week so we can be ready for the joy of Easter.

Amen.

## HOLY WEEK MISSION

### Holy Week Mission: Walk With Jesus

This week, we have entered the most important time of the Church year. Jesus invites us to walk with him, to notice his love, and to share that love with others. Each day, your mission is to do something that helps you follow Jesus' example in a real and meaningful way.

#### Monday – Be Gentle

Jesus was gentle with everyone he met. Today, try to use gentle words and actions. If someone is upset or worried, be the person who brings calm and kindness.

#### Tuesday – Be Helpful

Jesus served others with love. Look for a chance to help someone today – at home, in school, or on the playground. Even a small act of help can make a big difference.

#### Wednesday – Be Thankful

Jesus noticed the good in people. Today, take time to say thank you to someone who helps you every day – a teacher, a friend, a parent, or even someone you don't always remember to thank.

#### Thursday – Be Loving

On Holy Thursday, Jesus showed love by washing his friends' feet. Do something loving today: include someone who is left out, share something of yours, or show patience when it's hard.

#### Friday – Be Prayerful

Good Friday is a quiet day when we remember Jesus' great love. Find a peaceful moment to pray, think about Jesus, or simply sit quietly and remember how much he cares for you.

#### Saturday – Be Hopeful

Holy Saturday is a day of waiting and hope. Do something today that brings hope to someone else – a smile, a message, a kind surprise, or a helping hand.

#### Easter Sunday – Celebrate!

Jesus is risen! Share joy with others today. Celebrate the new life and hope that Easter brings.