



A Living Easter

Holy Week Guide

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A Living Easter

We are on the threshold of Holy Week, or Easter Week, the most important Christian commemoration in the world; a time to remember the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Year after year, the calendar points us to this special time, not to confirm the exact dates of the events narrated in the Gospels, but to call the people of God to reflection, repentance, conversion, hope, and Christian commitment.

The Holy Scriptures, from the Pentateuch to the Book of Revelation, evoke the event of the Lamb who was slain as a turning point in the history of salvation. In the words of Saint Paul: “For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Corinthians 5:7b).

The remembrance of this event must go beyond mere recall or religious or liturgical routine. In the challenging times we live in, it is no longer enough simply to identify with that history; for Easter to be relevant, Christians must go further.

Paulo Freire underscores this challenge, stating: “The real Easter is not commemorative rhetoric. It is praxis; it is historical involvement. The old Easter of rhetoric is dead—with no hope of resurrection. It is only in the authenticity of historical praxis that Easter becomes the death which makes life possible.”

This is precisely what motivates this guide, “A Living Easter”: to stir up an awareness that brings practical hope in the face of today’s challenges. Reflecting on the life of Jesus leads us to die in order to make way for abundant life for all.

In this devotional guide, we will take a brief journey through each day of Holy Week. Various writers, committed to the study of Sacred Scripture, from different Christian traditions and sociocultural contexts, will encourage us to reread the events that nourish our Easter faith.

We pray to God that this modest devotional will be useful to its readers. May it inspire the faith, hope, and commitment to the lives to which all of us are called.

Dr. Arnoldo Aguilar B.
Coordinator of the Biblical and Theological Education

Licda. Judith Castañeda
General Coordinator, CEDEPCA

For using this guide

Just as the Christian tradition commemorates the glorious birth of Jesus, it also commemorates the days of his passion, death, and resurrection. Both events mark the intervention of God's saving action in human history. The Bible, seen in context, highlights God's action amidst the various dark stages of the human journey.

Our current reality in Guatemala, in Latin America, and beyond, continues to be a setting where the good news of the gospel is relevant and urgent. Therefore, with this devotional guide, we want to meditate on and "relearn" how precious life is, just as Jesus perceived it, to the point of fighting for it to the very end.

This guide may be used by individuals, but it would best be utilized in small groups. To be consistent with the inclusive practices of Jesus Christ, make space for everyone – regardless of ethnicity, age, gender, or social standing – to be a part of this experience.

Recommendations for using the guide:

- Approach this Guide with a spirit of meditation, prayer, and fasting, at a dedicated time, in an appropriate place, away from distractions.
- The Guide is divided into eight sections, one for each day, from Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday. Daily readings are assigned and would preferably be done in community.
- We suggest an antiphonal prayer where "S" introduces the voice of the speaker and "R" is the community's response.
- Each entry is divided into different sections to build a group devotional experience that combines prayer, reading, praise, and sharing reflections and feelings.
- The sections titled, "What does the biblical text say to us?" and "What do we say to God now?" are designed to be participatory and interactive. The first invites us to savor and dive into a direct encounter with the text. The second invites us to respond and commit to the word we perceive from the first encounter with the text and the reflection.
- The time for singing is a moment to offer praise to God, not just to hear it. Therefore, we recommend that the lyrics be provided to the participants.
- At the end of each section, a prayer is offered that summarizes the feelings and challenges set forth in the reflection. The prayer may be enriched with personalized elements that emphasize the sending of God's people into their daily reality.

We pray that this Guide may be useful for every person, family, or church. By revisiting the traditions of Holy Week and sharpening our active listening to the Word of God, may we understand the "Living Easter" we are called to experience in the here and now.

“The Image Maker”

By Gabriela Mistral, Nobel Prize in Literature, 1945

What kind of image do you want? asked
the sculptor.
We have saints made of pine,
There are plaster images,
Look at this recumbent Christ,
Pure cedar wood,
It depends on who commissions it,
A family or a church,
Or if the only objective
Is to put it in a museum.

Let me explain, then,
What I truly desire.

I need an image
Of Jesus the Galilean,
That reflects his failure
In attempting a new world,
That stirs consciences
And changes thoughts,
I don't want it locked away
In churches and convents.

It is not going to be in a family's home
To preside over their prayers,
It is not going to be set on a float
Carried on shoulders.
I want a living image
Of a suffering Jesus,
That will illuminate the heart and mind
of whoever looks upon it.

I want it to stir up a desire to take him
down
From his cross and his torment,
That whoever contemplates the image
Will not be left staring at a dead man,

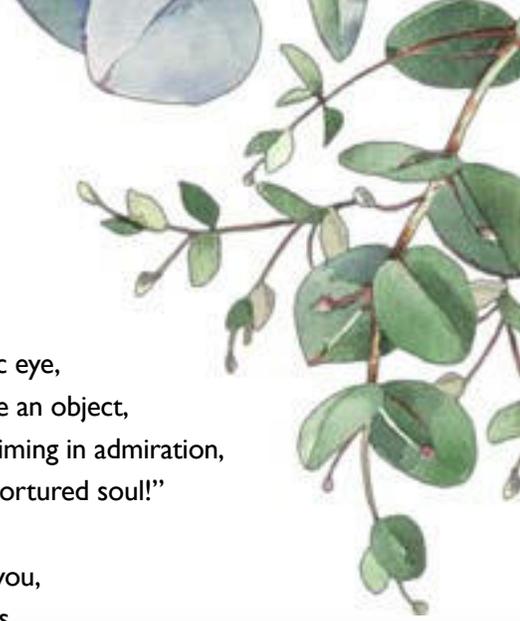
Nor, with an artistic eye,
Merely contemplate an object,
Before which exclaiming in admiration,
“What a beautiful tortured soul!”

Forgive me if I tell you,
The sculptor replies,
That surely you will not find here
That image of the Nazarene.

Go and find it in the streets
Among the homeless,
In hospices and hospitals
Where people are dying
In shelters
Where the elderly are abandoned,
In marginalized communities,
Among hungry children,
Among abused women,
Among the unemployed.

That image of Christ –
Do not look for it in museums,
Do not look for it in statues,
In altars and temples.

Do not follow in the processions
The footsteps of the Nazarene,
Do not look for it in wood,
In bronze, stone, or plaster,
Better to look among the poor
for his image of flesh and blood!



Contributors to this guide include

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Sunday, March 29, 2026

Blessed is the King who Comes Bringing Peace



Introduction

At the beginning of the culminating week of Jesus' life and ministry, the biblical text presents Jesus entering Jerusalem amidst songs and shouts of acclamation from hearts thirsting for hope and change. A murky image of the Messiah fuels jubilant hearts that base their expectations on their own perceptions. Jesus is there, coming to terms with the bleak moment that is approaching, step by step to the "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kills the prophets and stones those sent to it!" (Matthew 23:37). The new Passover would take place, the Lamb of God confronting the sin of the world, opening a new covenant with God for all flesh. Let us then go out to receive him – this time not only with cloaks or palm branches – but by bowing our will and obedience to his call.

Check in With Yourself

We come, we are here, we are. As you read these lines, you are invited to pause and look within yourself. What do you see? What occupies you? What worries you? For a moment, make your whole being visible before the God who comes to you, and listen.

Prayer

(S/ Speaker – R/ Response)

S/ Listen! He's coming! Listen! Hear the voice coming from afar. Isn't it the wind carrying the echo of news? Let's listen closely and pay attention. He's coming! It can be heard among the people... Who are they talking about? Why all the commotion?

R/ Listen! Make way, look over there, in the distance. Isn't that Jesus arriving? And riding on a donkey! He's coming! Several women shout. Attentive to what is happening, gathering branches, lifting children, laughing joyfully.

S/ Listen! We want to see him. Will he speak about something? Let him walk among us and let us feel salvation through his words. Listen! Hear... Jesus is coming!

All: His life, his love, his peace remain with us...

Hosanna! Hosanna! Alleluia!

(Taken from: Peniel Reformed Church)

Bible Reading: Luke 19:28-40 NRSV

What does the biblical text say to us?

Reflect on and share about what draws your attention in this passage.

Biblical Reflection

Willi Hugo Pérez

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—

*I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

-Robert Frost

Life is a journey and a pilgrimage. We can travel it along the comfortable path, without fatigue, or choose the demanding path of commitment which, although winding and sacrificial, leads to a greater good. The Christian faith reminds us that the true meaning of the journey is discovered when we walk in God's footsteps and in service to the good of humanity.

Such was the life of Jesus. His ministry was marked by unwavering fidelity to the Kingdom of God. He did not seek prestige or power; he embraced service, compassion, and sacrificial love. His journey was oriented toward justice, restoration, and peace. This fidelity led him, consciously, to Jerusalem.

Commemorating his passion and unjust death, today we remember his entry into Jerusalem, where the events that would lead him to the cross, but also to the resurrection, would unfold. This final stage of Jesus, the Christ, challenges us to consider how we recognize him, how we follow him, and how we commit ourselves to his mission.

With determination, Jesus sets his face (Luke 9:51) and begins the ascent to Jerusalem. He goes before his disciples, toward the fulfillment of his mission. The city was filled with pilgrims who had come for Passover, the memorial of Israel's liberation. The festival rekindled the hope of a new liberation, this time from Roman rule, and the longing for God's ultimate intervention.

Amid this religious and patriotic fervor, Jesus makes his entrance as the Envoy of God, the promised Messiah and King of peace. He does not arrive as a military leader ready to impose his kingdom by force. His style is different: he rides a young donkey, in accordance with the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9-10. This gesture reveals the nature of his reign: humility, kindness, service, and peace.

The crowd greets him with acclamations. They spread their cloaks on the road as a sign of recognition and homage. This gesture expresses self-denial and surrender: recognizing Jesus as King implies renouncing one's own ego and submitting one's life to his will.

The people cry out: "Hosanna! Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Hosanna" means "Save us now!" It is the cry of a weary, wounded, and needy people imploring God's intervention. In Jesus, they place their hopes for salvation and liberation.

They acclaim him as King of peace, echoing the angelic announcement in Luke 2:14. May peace from Heaven descend upon this land-without-peace. The peace that Jesus brings is not merely the absence of conflict. It

is shalom: holistic well-being, harmony with God, with oneself, with others, and with creation. It implies justice, health, joy, and fullness. Following Jesus means committing to this peace, especially for those who live in poverty, violence, injustice, and exclusion.

But not everyone celebrates. While some acknowledge and acclaim, others question and reject. The Pharisees demand that the disciples be silenced. But Jesus responds that if they remain silent, the stones will cry out. The truth of God cannot be stifled or silenced.

This passage confronts us with an essential question: How do we receive the coming King? Acclaiming him involves more than words; it demands consistency of life.

- It is choosing not to live solely for self-interest, but to dedicate ourselves to something greater: the Kingdom of God, in service to love, truth, justice, and peace.
- It is radical change, shedding our "cloaks"—pride, self-sufficiency, and security—to surrender our lives to the Lord and open ourselves to encountering our neighbors.
- It is committing ourselves to the Gospel of salvation and liberation, embracing the task of proclaiming and embodying the Kingdom in a world wounded by sin, corruption, injustice, and violence.
- It is standing in solidarity with those who cry out for salvation and peace: the suffering, the violated, the marginalized, and the needy in our communities.
- It is choosing the path of peace Jesus lays out: working for the reconciliation of people with God, with themselves, with others, and with creation. Peace is at the heart of our mission.

The Gospel calls us to welcome Jesus each day, not only with words, but with faithfulness and concrete acts of love. It invites us to embody his message of salvation and peace, to live and proclaim the Kingdom of God (his justice and hope) in the midst of contexts

marked by hatred, indifference, injustice, hostility, and death.

May our lives, as we acclaim “Blessed is the King who comes,” reflect consistency with that acknowledgment. May Christ’s peace blossom within us and, through us, reach others.



What do we say to God now?

Express to God what the Scripture meditation inspires in you.

Song: “Hosanna – Cloaks and Palms” (English Translation).

Rubén Ruiz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7JmXhNZE4kc>

Cloaks and palms they cast forth
The joyful people of the Lord Jesus, from afar, begin
to see
The Son of God who comes riding

While a thousand voices there resound
Hosanna to the One who comes in the name of
the Lord
With a breath of great exclamation they proclaim in
triumphant voice

Hosanna, hosanna to the King! (2x)

As at the entrance to Jerusalem
One day we too will be able to sing
To Jesus Christ who will come again
To take us to the eternal home

Prayer

At the beginning of this week of reflection and conversion, we admire and give thanks for Jesus’ courageous resolve in his final hour. May the Spirit that moved the Son of God be with God’s people in this time so that with the same resolve and courage we may be faithful to God’s mission in a world that is both so hostile and so needy. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

My House Shall Be Called a House of Prayer



Introduction

Sacred space has held, and continues to hold, a significant place in the Christian faith. A wide range of forms, rituals, conditions, and authorized individuals revolve around the temples, chapels, and churches of today. In Latin America, one can see all forms of churches ranging from state-of-the-art, massive architectural gems to small, flimsy shacks barely held up by four wooden beams. What is the difference between them? Jesus assumes the prophetic voice to unmask the artifices of religious hypocrisy, but more than that, to restore sacred space—not necessarily physical space, but the symbolic space built on the foundations of justice and equity, where communion with God means dignified communion with our fellow human beings.

Check in With Yourself

We come, we are here, we are. As you read these lines, you are invited to pause and look within yourself. What do you see? What occupies you? What worries you? For a moment, make your whole being visible before the God who comes to you, and listen.

Prayer

S/ God of life, you have always sought to encounter your people, longing for a joyful meeting.

R/ Forgive us, Lord, when in coming to meet us you have found only our tables and our interests, obstacles that prevent the meeting of hearts.

S/ Renew our devotion, O God, in this busy world; make us people thirsting for your Presence, attentive to your voice and to the voices of our neighbors.

R/ By your blessed grace, guide our steps to build communities with open doors, without duplicity or hypocrisy, communities worthy of being called “houses of God.”

All: Amen.

Bible Reading: Matthew 21:11-17 NRSV

What does the biblical text say to us?

Reflect on and share about what draws your attention in this passage.

Biblical Reflection

Joel Ramírez

Jesus’ arrival at the temple was a common occurrence for him and all the Jews of his time, but this time Jesus would do something different. He would restore the temple’s true meaning: a “House of Prayer,” a house of communion and encounter with God and with others, a place of liberation rather than oppression and plunder.

He then staged a powerful, energetic, and courageous protest against those who exploited the poor in the temple courtyards. While acknowledging that the trade in animals and other goods was necessary for the functioning of the priestly and sacrificial system, the central problem was that this trade was controlled by the high priest’s family and the ruling classes of the time.

In this place of commerce and profit, those who suffer most are the poor, who also bear the label of “unclean.” Unclean because they did not comply with the mandates of the Law and were required to offer a reparative sacrifice due to their condition. Most had to buy the animals for sacrifice upon arriving at the temple because, due to the long distances, they could not transport them. However, if they did not buy them there, they were rejected, with the claim that they “had some defect.”

Thus, to offer their purification sacrifice, penitents were exploited by merchants, who charged them exorbitant prices. When Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers and the chairs of those selling doves, he was staging a protest that symbolically dismantled or broke the chain of the cultic apparatus that oppressed the poor of that time.

As we know, Jesus was obedient to the Law of Moses, which was part of his worship life (Mark 1:44). However, for Jesus, this way of practicing ritual [in the temple courtyard] was not in accordance with God's will, as he mentions in Mark 7:9-13. While sacrifice had been established as a means of access for God's people, those who controlled the temple and the rites used them as a business.

We cannot deny that religions must have a system of worship and ritual; this is necessary for religious life. When this system is practiced and administered sincerely, it becomes a proper means of bringing people closer to God. The problem arises when the liturgy consumes, harms, enslaves, and exploits people, to the point of creating distinctions between those who have the financial means to fulfill the rites, or in our time, generating preferences for those with power, social standing, economic resources, and more. Many people do not have the shoes, clothes, car, offering, or "adequate" tithes to attend church on the weekend.

For Israel, the temple held profound significance; God had a place there, a dwelling in the midst of the people. This fostered a relationship of security and forgiveness. But little by little, they strayed from this beautiful experience, transforming from a "House of Prayer" into a "Den of Robbers," into vain ritualism that provided them with everything but a relationship with God's presence.

Can we truly say that our temples and churches (both physical and personal) are places of welcome, of shelter, places of encounter between people and God? Places

where we seek conversion, participation in Jesus, in communion, and in prayer? Do they promote worship and restoration, or have they become centers for business and the division of spoils?

What do we say to God now?

Express to God what the Scripture meditation inspires in you.

Song: "The Doors of Your House" (English Translation).

Gerardo Oberman - Horacio Vivares

<https://cancionerometodista.com/canciones/las-puertas-de-tu-casa/>

The doors of your house opened for me,
O God of heaven and earth, how good it is to be here!

If we open our arms, we can receive
whoever needs you and wants to share:
your word, songs, silence and prayer,
a sincere embrace, peace and your forgiveness,

the bread that nourishes, strengthens, and gives
courage,
//and the fire of your Spirit that ignites the heart.//

Prayer

God of life, you reveal yourself to your people each day. Guide us to discern the true foundations of an authentic and compassionate community of faith. May we, in our journey with our brothers and sisters in faith, build sacred places where dignity and justice are evident to every person. Then will we celebrate your presence, confessing that you are there, wherever two or three are gathered confidently in your name. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tuesday, March 31, 2026

Fig Trees Missing Longed-For Fruit



Introduction

Every element of God's creation has been designed with tenderness and perfection, able to fit into the intricate workings of life, with a specific purpose and role. The presence of Jesus among women and men restored that purpose, bringing us back to the grand symphony of creation in which we all play a part. In this sense, each person can regain the capacity to bear fruit that satisfies their own needs and those of others, but failing to do so represents a serious distortion of the purpose of existence. Toward Jesus' final moments on earth, the Gospels reflect this profound commitment among those who hold the faith of the Nazarene, because it is not words that best speak of faith in Jesus, but rather the fruits of that faith.

Check in With Yourself

We come, we are here, we are. As you read these lines, you are invited to pause and look within yourself. What do you see? What occupies you? What worries you? For a moment, make your whole being visible before the God who comes to you, and listen.

Prayer

S/ Thank you, God, for showing us your face in the love and sacrifice of Jesus the Savior.

R/ Encourage us to live like fruitful fig trees in this hungry world, bearing the fruits of God's kingdom.

S/ Free our hearts from a selfish view of life; do not let our purpose be reduced to our personal pleasures and comforts.

R/ May your Holy Spirit be the perfect sap that makes a strong conscience blossom, and makes our gifts and resources flourish for the benefit of those most in need.

All: Amen.

Bible Readings: Mark 11:12-14, 20-25;
John 13:21-38 NRSV

What does the biblical text say to us?

Reflect on and share about what draws your attention in this passage.

Biblical Reflection

Lubia Aracely de León Vela

This reflection is situated within the Easter horizon, aiming to delve deeper into some elements that energize the living out of Christian faith. As the transformative influence of those within Christian traditions appears to be waning, it is necessary to return to the original spirit of the Gospel to renew the meaning of effective discipleship.

The passage in Mark 11:12-14 focuses pedagogically on spiritual barrenness. The evangelist depicts Jesus performing an extraordinary, somewhat unusual sign, since it is not a healing of a person, but rather the "cursing" of a fig tree. To approach the meaning of the text, we are invited to analyze some key words and places alluded to in the narrative.

Jesus is now in Jerusalem, the most important religious and political center for the Jews, which gave them their identity and served as a source of national pride. Also relevant is the use of the allegorical figure of the fig tree, which represents Israel as a symbol of prosperity and spiritual abundance. This episode is thus linked to the expulsion of the merchants from the temple, in which Jesus exposes and rebukes the corruption of faith, in which spiritual life becomes barren.

According to the story, before arriving at the temple, Jesus expresses a hunger, a hunger that seems unique to him, and which may symbolize his thirst to do God's will. Finding no fruit among the fig tree's leafy branches, Jesus decrees that it should wither, for it appears fertile but is not, nor will it ever be. This action alludes to divine judgment upon the people and their leaders who had distorted God's image and will, masking them with fruitless practices and rituals that excluded the God of life, practices that would lead to their downfall.

Upon returning from the Temple (vv. 20-25) the fig tree is already withered and the disciples are astonished, at which Jesus concludes his teaching by highlighting that to "bear fruit," faith, prayer and forgiveness are necessary, actions that will be fundamental in the life of the first Christian communities.

The second point of this reflection addresses the crisis of discipleship when faced with adversity, which can trigger the best or worst in people. The text of John 13:21-38 touches on the fine points of friendship, fidelity and love. The passage places Jesus at the Last Supper with his disciples, where service is central and the fruit of service is happiness. However, not everyone understands Jesus' mission, so their level of commitment, as well as their position, will be at stake. Judas' betrayal is evident; it occurs "at night," a moment that may refer to the disciple's emotional state. Blinded, Judas ends up betraying the one who was once his "master." But he is not the only one who loses faith; Peter's fidelity will also be called into question.

In closing, for mature, conscious, and committed discipleship to exist, mere membership in a faith community is not enough. Rather, each believer must embody the values of the Kingdom, remaining connected to that spirit in order to "bear fruit." Consistent actions characterized by mercy, faith, and

forgiveness become an attractive, fresh, and credible gospel; by this, "they will know you" (Matthew 7:16).

What do we say to God now?

Express to God what the Scripture meditation inspires in you.

Song: "May This Church Be a Tree" (English Translation).

Pablo Soza

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RwSp53WFEU

May this church be a tree
Planted in your home,
that there may be celebration and joy
and prayer beneath its branches.

With deep roots
and its arms reaching for the heavens,
may this church be fruitful
bearing fruits of consolation.

Chorus
"A tree planted by the waters
of eternal life of our God."

May this church also be
Like a tree in the town square,
a nest for free birds
and a refuge for passersby,
and may it be like the tree
at the corner of my house,
that sees me arrive from afar
and embraces me.

May this church be a tree,
oh good God, wherever you wish,
but always supported
by your love and your way,
to bear fruit and shade
or offer wood;

May this church that names you
be the tree of life.

Prayer

We come together as a community of faith to ask you, o God, to guide our steps toward true discipleship, understanding that our lives should not be spent merely consuming the blessings of your kingdom, but rather reproducing them abundantly. Make us a community that speaks about you, but also a community that demonstrates the fruits of love in our daily lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Wednesday, April 1, 2026

She Has Done a Good Deed



Introduction

We are gathered around the theme of Easter, that defining moment of the Christian faith. Yet, lest we get ahead of ourselves, we must think of this time as more than a surge of emotion or familiar traditions that reinforce our identity. It is also a time for discernment—reflecting both on the historical events of Jesus' final days and on our own lives within this moment of history. While not everyone feels drawn to or challenged by the events of Easter Week, anyone can see this season as an invitation to lay their best selves at Jesus' feet.

Check in With Yourself

We come, we are here, we are. As you read these lines, you are invited to pause and look within yourself. What do you see? What occupies you? What worries you? For a moment, make your whole being visible before the God who comes to you, and listen.

Prayer

S/ Beloved Jesus, we know that not everyone who claims to be close to you truly walks with you through your most challenging days.

R/ Lord, grant us discernment of the times, and an understanding of the opportunities that life places before us, so that we may walk in the same Spirit that led you to Calvary.

P/ Hear our loving cry, O Savior! We implore your radiant light and guidance.

R/ Only in your light will we know that our steps are guided by truth and justice;
only in your light will we understand that our steps become one with yours.

All: Amen.

Bible Reading: Matthew 26:1-16 NRSV

What does the biblical text say to us?

Reflect on and share about what draws your attention in this passage.

Biblical Reflection

Verónica Rozotto Reyes

We are accustomed to seeing during this Easter week the serious situation that Jesus faced: his persecution, the plot, the intrigues, the trial, and his death. But we often fail to see that there were also small gestures of kindness, strength, and compassion shown to him. This story is one of them.

Verses 1 and 2, which open the narrative, set the scene for what will follow. Jesus lets his disciples know that there are only two days left until his death. This is the context in which the next two stories unfold, masterfully intertwined.

Matthew shows us the relation between verses 3-5 and 14-16, a fact that, if we disregarded verses 6-13, would count as a single story that narrates how the main religious leaders and elders planned to arrest Jesus and kill him (3-5), and how Judas Iscariot seeks them out and offers to hand Jesus over in exchange for a large sum of money (14-16).

The introduction and the story of the plot to kill Jesus clearly illustrate the prevailing political and religious climate of insecurity, fear, instability, and confusion, which intensified as time went on. How could Jesus have felt, breathing in and sensing that everything around him was conspiring against his very life? It was impossible for him not to be affected by what was happening and what he would soon have to endure. He who had saved so many lives, restoring people's dignity, giving them health and happiness,

would now lose his own. And in this vulnerable state and agonizing situation, could he have felt supported by his disciples? Jesus, too, needed to be supported, consoled, comforted, and strengthened.

But it wasn't precisely his disciples who did it. Herein lies the art of Matthew's narrative, which, amidst the tension is like a necessary oasis for Jesus, and a learning experience for his disciples. Between men who want to kill him (religious authorities, elders, Judas Iscariot) and those who, even in his final days, still don't fully understand him (his disciples), appears a woman who will never be forgotten (6-13), and will be remembered wherever the Gospel is preached, for what she did for Jesus, no one else managed to do during that tragic week for him.

The place is Bethany, mentioned several times in the Gospels, and it evokes stories of life, joy, friendship, and learning. That place will witness a new event, a unique and unforgettable one.

A woman enters; she hadn't been invited, as she wouldn't have been allowed at a gathering of men in the home of Simon, now healed. This didn't matter to her; she simply walked toward Jesus. We can imagine her serene yet confident stride, her eyes searching for and finding the one person for whom she would break the established norms of culture: Jesus. She approaches, carrying very expensive perfume, and pours it on Jesus' head as he sits at the table. This woman's actions, shown in the verbs "approach," "carry," and "pour," bring to mind the many times Jesus performed similar acts, healing the sick, raising the dead, and working miracles—gestures that restored life to those who received his kindness.

How pleasant it must have been for Jesus to receive that unexpected anointing! His spirit was flooded with comfort, strength, understanding companionship, and blessing. "Why are you all bothering this woman?" He said. "She has done a beautiful thing for me... You will

not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial." This preparation did not refer to the exact moment of his death, but to the time before it—that is, the experience of anguish, vulnerability, and loneliness he would be facing. She brought him the thing he needed, something his disciples failed to recognize: comfort. That is why they remained focused solely on anger, on the cost of the perfume, on ignorance, and on the prejudices of those still imprisoned, under the pretext of helping the poor.

This text illuminates our path toward what to do in a world of constant conflict: to create spaces of solidarity, understanding, strength, companionship, comfort, and blessing for those who suffer injustice, persecution, war, migration, pandemics, racism, sexism, genocide, and so on. Passover, that festival of the Jewish people's liberation from the yoke of Pharaoh, must reclaim this spirit as a source of sustenance for human life, of understanding in the face of anguish, and of all that allows soul and body to find immediate solace in the face of a decaying reality.

What do we say to God now?

Express to God what the Scripture meditation inspires in you.

Song: "Like Mary in Bethany" (English Translation).

Alejandro Cativiela

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZnqQD8kQ6Y>

Like Mary in Bethany at the Lord's feet,
We who adore Christ, today hear His voice;
How pleasant it is to gaze upon Him, to praise Him
wholeheartedly,
To enliven our souls in the fire of His love!

Chorus

Come, yes, come! Pray, yes, pray!

Let us receive from the Lord joy, peace, and power;

Fight for Jesus, speak of His love;

Do not let the child and the woman be lost!

In our home, let us honor Jesus Christ every day
and live in the warmth of his presence;
Children, spouses, and siblings, let us always hold
onto the light,
Our home will be a piece of heaven, thanks be to
the Lord.

How many homes are unworthy of the sweet name
of home!
How many are torn apart under the dominion of
evil!
The Lord wants us to give them the life we have;
Let us bring eternal happiness to those who suffer.

Prayer

Inspired by the woman who knew how to do a
good deed in the darkest of times, we pray that our
actions will be courageous, decisive, generous, and
transformative. May nothing, internal or external, limit
us from demonstrating our dedication and commitment
to your kingdom of justice, peace, and joy. In Jesus'
name, Amen.



Thursday, April 2, 2026

Remember Me at the Table



Introduction

There is always time to strengthen the bonds that unite us. Even in the face of the most bitter moments of his life, Jesus made time to sit at the table with his friends. It was not a farewell gathering, but a meeting place, a sign of the abiding communion that would constitute the strong new community of faith. Blessed are those invited to the table of communion with Jesus! They share the bread of life and the wine of the new covenant.

Check in With Yourself

We come, we are here, we are. As you read these lines, you are invited to pause and look within yourself. What do you see? What occupies you? What worries you? For a moment, make your whole being visible before the God who comes to you, and listen.

Prayer

S/ We thank you, blessed Jesus, for opening the table of communion before us; it is there that our eyes are opened to know you better.

R/ Thank you for this community of sisters and brothers who partake of the same bread and the same cup, in memory of your life and death, until you return.

S/ Give us, Lord, always of this bread, so that, satisfied, we may satisfy the hunger of our brothers and sisters.

R/ Amen! Give us always of this bread and this cup that makes us witnesses of your sacrifice in God's ever-praiseworthy redemption.

All: Amen.

Bible Reading: Luke 22:7-23 NRSV

What does the biblical text say to us?

Reflect on and share about what draws your attention in this passage.

Biblical Reflection

Betsey Moe

Tables and shared meals play an important role in Luke's gospel. Jesus ate with sinners, tax collectors, and Pharisees. Jesus fed a hungry multitude rather than sending them away. Jesus' parables described banquets and celebrations and revealed God's heart of hospitality, humility, and service. Shared meals were transformative teaching moments.

Therefore, we might expect that Jesus' final meal with his disciples would be significant. It happened to be the Passover meal, when Jewish families traditionally recalled God liberating their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. As the blood of the Passover lamb on the doorpost of a family's home had protected those inside the house from death, so Jesus' blood of the new covenant would bring salvation and liberation from all forces that would enslave the human race. As Jesus broke the bread and shared the cup with his disciples, Jesus told them to remember him in the future as they gathered at tables together. The bread broken and wine shared would become signs of Christ's body and blood, continually present among them.

Despite Jesus' emphasis on the table as the future touchpoint – the "meeting place" where his followers would recall God's acts of liberation, Christians in the 2,000 years since have largely focused on the cross when they remember Jesus. And while the cross is a powerful symbol of Christ suffering with the people, Jesus did not tell his disciples to remember him by

returning to the site of the crucifixion, reliving the horror and lamenting the injustice of his death; instead, they were to come back to the table to remember Jesus.

Diana Butler Bass, a Methodist historian and theologian, points out an important sequence in Luke's as well as John's account of Jesus' passion: Table – Trial – Cross – Tomb – Table. She acknowledges that while the cross is the central event in the sequence, the table is to be the place of remembrance and recognition. She imagines the table in the upper room, where the disciples gathered with Jesus, to be "the last supper of the old world, the last meal under any empire," and "the First Feast of the Kingdom That Has Come. The first meal of the new age, the world of mutual service, reciprocity, equality, abundance, generosity, and unending thanksgiving. Pass the cup, keep it going, hand to hand, filled and refilled, time after time. This night is the final night of dominion, the end of slavery; and this night is the first night of communion, the beginning of true freedom."

Indeed, at the table, we remember that Jesus cared about all people having enough to eat. At the table, we remember that Jesus ate with rich and poor, men and women, and all manner of sinners, and that all are welcome. At the table, with the Passover in mind, we remember the liberation from oppression that God desires for all of God's children. Not least of all, at the table, we experience the joy and mutual encouragement of community in Christ, where we find love, common ground, and hope sufficient to resist the oppressive forces of empire, until at last, we feast together at God's heavenly table.

What do we say to God now?

Express to God what the Scripture meditation inspires in you.

Song: "Come to the Table" (English Translation)
Magdalena García - Maximiliano Heusser - Silvina Mamani

<https://cancionerometodista.com/canciones/ven-a-la-mesa/>

Come to the table, there is room here,
you can sit next to me - there.
Come to the table, you have nothing to fear,
I want to offer you friendship that's sincere.

Come to the table, ready to listen,
we can heal our wounds.
Come to the table, to share
sweet bread, laughter, and everyday life.

Chorus

Come to the table,
we must tear down together every barrier and
dream together.

Prayer

Sustain us, Jesus, as you did those travelers on the road to Emmaus; accompany us on our journeys through life. Rebuke us when we fall into error; teach us what your gentle words can build up within us; reveal yourself to us when, around the table, our eyes open to discover you in the faces of our brothers and sisters. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday, April 3, 2026

Truly, This is the Son of God



Introduction

All the horror and human cruelty we see manifested today in violence, war, migration, dispossession, and countless forms of injustice have been a part of our history since ancient times. This same cruelty erupted with intensity against the humanity of Jesus, in an outrageous, shameful, and profoundly lamentable way. Was such a story necessary to contrast the Righteous One among the unrighteous? Is this narrative necessary to appreciate the mission of the Son of God among a perverse humanity? In a world that still breathes hatred and an affinity for destruction, Jesus proposes a path that does not underestimate this cruelty, but rather embraces it as the inevitable transition toward a new era where life is reborn victorious.

Check in With Yourself

We come, we are here, we are. As you read these lines, you are invited to pause and look within yourself. What do you see? What occupies you? What worries you? For a moment, make your whole being visible before the God who comes to you, and listen.

Prayer

S/ Look, O Lord, upon the evil that afflicts us, the dark hearts that plot perversely each day to oppose justice.

R/ How can we resist? How can we remain steadfast in faith, piety, and solidarity when horror and cruelty threaten us?

S/ Grant that your Holy Spirit may be our inspiration and our strength each day to persevere diligently, working for a better world.

R/ God, our hope, strengthen our trust in your promises, as we walk through valleys of shadows and death.

All: Amen.

Bible Reading: Mark 15:1-41 NRSV

What does the biblical text say to us?

Reflect on and share about what draws your attention in this passage.

Biblical Reflection

Mario Eliazar Equite

The armor protecting his heart bore the seal of his lord: Caesar. He was a war veteran, proud of his many victories. He had walked close to death, and he had seen what it does to a man before his last breath; so he simply expected another day at work. However, as that Friday wore on, the commander of a hundred soldiers was deeply affected by what he saw and heard. The victim that day was entirely different: this man did not defend himself when the others did; he did not utter pleas or curses; he did not condemn or beg for mercy. He did only one thing that shook the Centurion's heart: He forgave.

As the day dawned, it was easy for the Roman army commander to see that the Jewish religious leaders were determined to condemn the man; they knew what they wanted, but they lacked the final authority to kill him. The centurion observed the priests' entire charade and knew that going before Pilate's tribunal was merely a ploy to exploit the fickle feelings of a politician lacking independent judgment.

His whip was poised, ready to silence the Nazarene as soon as he answered Pilate... but no answer came. The condemned man came like a lamb to the slaughter, and the Centurion watched him, gradually realizing his innocence. Pilate offered a solution within the framework of the law: "I will release one prisoner to you.... Which one do you want?" he asked, seeking

to please the crowd, hoping they would see that Jesus was innocent. A confessed convict was released; the Centurion knew how difficult it had been to arrest him, so his surprise continued to grow.

“Crucify him!” the crowd shouted, seeing Pilate’s inability to make a decision. It was clear to the Centurion that justice was not being done; an innocent man had been condemned that day. But he was there to follow orders. He only watched as they mocked Jesus, placing a tight crown of thorns on his head, removing the purple robe they had used to ridicule him, and leaving him in his simple, tattered clothes. Pilate’s final farewell was a whipping on Jesus’ back. “A whipping?” the Centurion wondered.

On the way to Golgotha, the Nazarene repeatedly stumbled under the weight of the cross. The commander of a hundred soldiers was bewildered; he had witnessed injustices in his work, but this was unprecedented. Without consulting anyone, he made the decision to place someone along the path to help carry the cross – perhaps to ease the Nazarene’s burden and pain, or to soothe the unfamiliar emotions that were rife in his heart at that moment.

When Jesus was nailed to the cross, the jeers continued: “Save yourself!” “Come down from that cross!” Each shout, each insult, further wounded the mind of the Centurion, who was sinking deeper into the confusion of so much hatred and injustice. Watching at the foot of the cross, the Centurion waited to hear the cries of the condemned man, an accusation, at least, against those who had unjustly punished him. Those words never came. All that the centurion saw and heard that Friday was enough for him to recognize Jesus, saying, “Truly this man was the Son of God.”

In all that we have seen, heard, and experienced from the Nazarene, is it enough to make us recognize him as the Son of God? His actions that Friday continue to cry out through the universe that he died out of love for all humanity.

What do we say to God now?

Express to God what the Scripture meditation inspires in you.

Song: “Lamb of God” (English Translation).
Adventist Hymn

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg_OBN_3eaY

Son of God, eternal King;
From His throne He descended
to tread vile ground
and perish like a Lamb.

Chorus
Oh, Savior! My Savior!
Holy Lamb of my God.
He who washed me clean of my sin
is the Lamb, my Lord.

On a cross, He was nailed
by an infamous and cruel mob.
They mercilessly sacrificed
my Jesus, faithful Lamb.

I, Jesus, am a sinner;
but Your grace saved me.
From this day forward I will follow You;
I am Your Lamb, my Lord.

Prayer

Your words warned us that nothing would be easy, that there would be affliction in the world, but that we should trust because you, Jesus, have overcome the world. Help us not to succumb to fear, not to give up on our calling, but to believe that what is sown in weakness will be reaped in power. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Silence and Resistance



Introduction

How can one lift one's head after suffering such helplessness and pain? How can one continue living when one's heart is shattered into pieces? The day after Jesus' death might seem like a day marked only by mourning, but there is so much more to it. Without the Teacher's presence, what is the point of insisting on the call to discipleship? Yet, in the atmosphere of pain and indignation, a space opens up to broaden the perspective on Jesus' movement. Holy Saturday is not just about mourning a great man, but also about acknowledging all those who, like Jesus, suffer death in the most unjust ways imaginable. This situation, so common in Latin America, calls us to deep solidarity and empathy for our neighbor.

Check in With Yourself

We come, we are here, we are. As you read these lines, you are invited to pause and look within yourself. What do you see? What occupies you? What worries you? For a moment, make your whole being visible before the God who comes to you, and listen.

Prayer

S/ God of life, broaden our vision, expand our hearts to hold those who today suffer the blow of death in its various forms.

R/ Strengthen our stance in the face of death, that our determination for life may be evident in our words and actions.

S/ Accompany with your tender presence the broken and weary heart, that your embrace may be felt amidst the pain of loss.

R/ Make us instruments of peace and hope in solidarity with those who suffer today.

All: Amen.

Bible Reading: Matthew 27:57-66 NRSV

What does the biblical text say to us?

Reflect on and share about what draws your attention in this passage.

Biblical Reflection

Julio David Vásquez

Around the world, there are people who bear their grief in imposed silence or dwell in anguish with limited hope. Faced with this reality, a poignant question arises: Is it possible that, from the depths of sorrow, a resurrection might spring forth that transforms humanity? Perhaps silent waiting will bring us the answer through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The women mentioned in Matthew 27:56 and 27:61, sentinels on the first Holy Saturday, personify the transition from grief to freedom. They never abandoned their posts; they chose to remain in the places of greatest suffering, namely, at the site of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus' body. While the powerful were busy securing a stone to suppress life, they remained in a vigil that today we would call resistance.

Theirs is an inspiring witness that helps us discover where we should be today: alongside those who suffer, alongside those who weep, alongside those who have lost all hope. In a competitive and consumerist world, where material needs seem limitless and there is no time for mercy, these women teach us that love does not retreat in the face of apparent defeat.

The Gospel account presents an ironic contrast: the priests, before Pilate, busied themselves trying to secure a stone to silence the Truth, even violating the religious sabbath they so fervently defended. In

contrast, the women remained in a contemplative silence that was not passivity, but rather the faithfulness of those who have nothing to give but their own devotion.

Outside the tomb, there was a place for those silenced, those who lived in anguish, those oppressed by the injustice suffered by the crucified man. There, the silenced found a dignity that the system denied them. As theologian Jon Sobrino (2009) aptly points out in his proposal for the Civilization of Poverty, “true humanization does not come from the accumulation of goods, but from the capacity to recognize dignity in the fragility of the other.”

Holy Saturday is not a void, but a vigil of resistance. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us (Romans 8:11), then our bodies and communities are called to give life in the midst of death. Hope is not passive waiting, but the certainty that the same power that broke open the tomb acts today through our solidarity with the silenced.

To ensure our Easter celebration is consistent with the sacrifice of the Crucified One, this Holy Saturday invites us to:

- Honor the grief of others and accompany our neighbors in their pain.
- Identify the “great stones” of indifference that deprive the oppressed of their freedom.
- Share the bread and the cup as a commitment to justice, recognizing that resurrection begins when we value the lives of others as much as our own.

Just as Joseph of Arimathea offered a possibility where none seemed to exist, we are called to transform the tomb into a space of gestation for a life that definitively triumphs over the structures of death.

What do we say to God now?

Express to God what the Scripture meditation inspires in you.

Song: “Give us Hope and Peace” (English Translation)
Gerardo Oberman

<https://redcreate.org.ar/danos-esperanza-y-paz/>

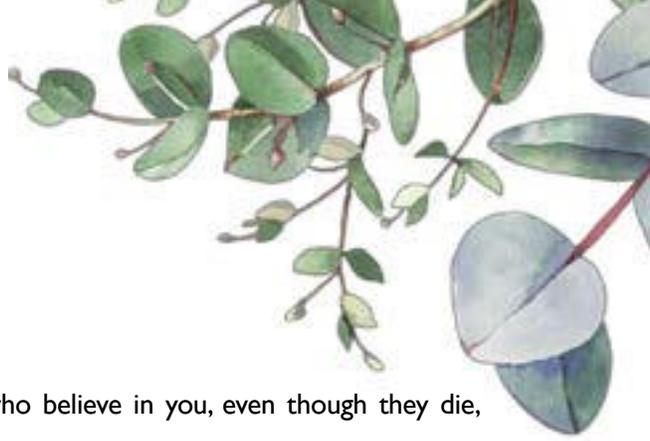
Give us hope and peace,
Give us faith and your blessing,
Give us the light of your gaze,
Give us your love.

Prayer

God of all consolation, in the midst of the pain and suffering that our people are experiencing today, amidst so many tears and sighs that envelop the misfortune of those who suffer most, may the good news of salvation be reborn as a beacon of light for all. Guide us to transform our faith into a practice of accompaniment and solidarity with those who suffer. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Sunday, April 5, 2026

To Rise, Free From Fear



Introduction

We are witnesses to multiple forces that threaten and destroy life. Unfortunately, daily conversations are permeated by themes that mass media and social networks introduce into the collective imagination, mainly related to violence, war, death, and risk. It seems that this has become the entertainment of thousands. But how often do we talk about what transcends death? The resurrection of Jesus, more than a historical event, inspires imagination, creativity, and faith to rebel against death's dominion. We understand that Jesus, during his life, resisted many perverse models and structures, but even in his death, he refused to accept it as the end of history. His resurrection speaks of resistance and of victory, inviting us to embrace life and not give in to the fear of death.

Check in With Yourself

We come, we are here, we are. As you read these lines, you are invited to pause and look within yourself. What do you see? What occupies you? What worries you? For a moment, make your whole being visible before the God who comes to you, and listen.

Prayer

S/ God of light, illumine our path in these dark times when death seems to prevail throughout the world.

R/ Every day, in many ways, we are threatened by situations that endanger the well-being of ourselves or of our loved ones. Where will we go, Lord?

S/ Do not let us fall prey to fear; may the hope of life be stronger than the adversities that threaten us.

R/ May your glorious resurrection, Jesus, nourish the effort and struggle of all those who, while living, have died because of systems of sin and injustice.

Rekindle the hope of your people in the faith that

“those who believe in you, even though they die, will live.”

All: Amen.

Bible Reading: Matthew 28:1-20 NRSV

What does the biblical text say to us?

Reflect on and share about what draws your attention in this passage.

Biblical Reflection

Ángela Trejo Haager

The event of Jesus' Resurrection invites us to celebrate his love and life every Sunday. In fact, gathering as a Christian community on that day is in remembrance and affirmation of our faith in the risen Christ.

In the Gospel of Matthew, the narrative of Jesus' resurrection begins with the presence of Mary Magdalene and Mary, who set out early in the morning to go to the tomb. It is generally assumed that they were going to anoint the body, although this is not explicitly stated in these verses. What is very clear is that they, as they walked toward the stillness of the tomb, encountered an earthquake. And, in the midst of death, they heard words of life from the lips of an angel.

Mary Magdalene and Mary ran to share with the disciples what the angel had told them—the good news. Right in the middle of this whirlwind of emotions, amidst fear and joy, Jesus, their friend, companion, and Teacher, appeared on the path to greet them with a loving, familiar, and heartfelt welcome.

The encounter was incredibly moving! They felt the confidence to embrace Him and hold His feet,

recalling the deep affection and familiarity they shared. Jesus also reassured them: “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.” As the women ran, their feet filled with hope and love, fear grew and chaos reigned once more, for the Roman authorities had done everything possible to spread false rumors claiming that Jesus’ disciples had stolen His body.

In these complex times we live in, this story of the resurrection offers us much insight for navigating our daily lives. We must remember that fear is something we constantly experience through the economic, social, political, and religious systems that subjugate us with dread. This makes it easier to control an entire society that, often, doesn’t know what to do, and the only certainty is that we want to feel safe and free from fear.

Even so, under those circumstances, we continue walking like Mary Magdalene and Mary, who knew where they were going, and who pressed on with unwavering resolve. An invitation for this Easter season is to move forward to confront our fears, for we will learn to live with them and work through them alongside the risen Jesus. “Do not be afraid,” the angel told them; “Do not be afraid,” Jesus told them. We cannot live without fear, for it is a reality, and even with faith, this human condition will often be present.

Despite their fear, the women’s experience was also one of joy, of “great joy,” because they had certainty and believed what the angel had said. And, in the end, their belief reached its culmination of “great joy” when they found their friend Jesus.

Their encounter allowed them to remember the community in which they had journeyed for three years, amidst chaos—this community of Jesus’ disciples. The encounter of the women with Jesus brought to life the memory of shared meals, broken bread, celebrated wine, traveled paths, insightful conversations, and daily life.

That is precisely where the Easter light appears among us: when fear lurks, we call to mind the memories of our hearts. We continue seeking out an encounter with Jesus, in the company of a community, celebrating the Resurrection with great festivity, because yes!, we have risen and we will continue to rise to life – life in abundance.

What do we say to God now?

Express to God what the Scripture meditation inspires in you.

Song: “Hallelujah to the Risen Lord” (English Translation).

Carlos Rosas

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/ZsMNpOEBx0I>

Hallelujah, hallelujah!
Let us sing joyfully today
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
The Lord is risen!

The heavens sing, the earth rejoices
Because the Lord is risen!
We all sing and live joyfully
Because the Lord is risen!

Hallelujah, hallelujah!
Let us sing joyfully today
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
The Lord is risen!

Prayer

Victorious Jesus, thank you for opening a way for life for those who have only known the darkness of death in this world. We pray that in your resurrection, those who die under the tyranny of the powerful may rise again. May they live! May they rise from the tomb of oblivion and marginalization, may they break the enormous stone of injustice, may they return to encounter the prophetic community that survives death. In the name of Jesus, Amen.



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