

## Lent 2015 : Sixth week..... March 23 - 29

**1. Welcome....** Three minutes of silence. Let us be still.

**2. Conversation:** As we approach the Good Friday season we will dig a little deeper. If you are comfortable, try to share with the others something you are struggling with these days? Where do I need the Lord's help? Where do I need the community's prayers? (2 minutes per person). Please remember that what is discussed in these meetings remains confidential!

**3. Lectio Divina:** Mark 14: 1 – 15:47 This is long. It is the passion of Christ. Instead of reading it twice, we suggest it be read ONLY ONCE out loud, different people taking turns. Then do lectio Divina

**4. When "lectio" is finished,** play a few moments of an inspirational CD of music.

**5. Time of prayer together** (This will be time of Spontaneous prayer. People take turns to pray... as they wish. There are two parts....)

a) Spontaneous prayer of thanks; praise; blessings

e.g. I thank you Lord for.... I praise you Lord for.... I bless you Lord for.....

b) Prayer asking to enter more deeply into the Passion of Christ

**6. We will NOT meet next week.** We invite you, as fully as possible, to participate in the liturgies of the week... Holy Thursday, Passion Friday, or the Easter Vigil. This will be our LECTIO. However, you might want to prepare a "pot luck" for the next and last meeting, the week of April 6, Easter week.

**7. Read the contemplation**

## Contemplation: Week 6

### *Christ on the Cross:* The cross reveals the heart of our Creator

We will follow up on our reflection from last week's meditation: The darkness within. Yes, there is darkness within my soul, and I need Christ to heal me. Did you see it? Do you see it? Were you aware of it? As you contemplate in silence the darkness becomes more evident. No? So, what do I do with this? Here is the answer: I nail it to the CROSS of Christ!

As we enter Passion week, this most Holy week for Christians, the Lord reveals the mystery of His Trinitarian love in and through the cross. Jesus washes the feet of His disciples and tells us to do the same. This is a symbol of His washing our sins away. He later pardons Peter his infidelity. Jesus is patient with His unfaithful and wayward disciples. At the last, as Jesus experiences the crushing blow of hatred coming upon Him, rather than responding by crushing His enemies, He diffuses their hatred by absorbing it in His body, in and through the cross. He took upon Himself our sinfulness, becoming sin, that we might be saved. He bore our wounds in His flesh! By His wounds, we have been forgiven.

Let us focus more deeply on the Cross of Jesus. Think of the interior darkness you meditated upon last week. This darkness creates a separation with the Lord: my sinfulness; my arrogance; my self-righteousness; my greed; my jealousies; my nasty tongue. All of this creates a distance from my Lord. He does not leave: I do. How can this separation from God be overcome? How can there be a bridge between the holiness of the Lord and my darkness? The bridge over these troubled waters, is the wood of the Cross.

A young woman, Jordan Monge tells of discovering Jesus while studying at Harvard university. She writes in the magazine, "Christianity Today" that she was baptized in 2009. She tells of meeting dedicated Christians who helped her move through her life long atheism, into discovering the living God. A pivotal moment in her conversion was to become deeply aware of her sinfulness, her darkness, and her powerlessness to do anything about it.

She says: 'Reading the scriptures... I became painfully aware of my arrogance and how I was prone to fits of rage. I was unforgiving and unwaveringly selfish. I passed sexual boundaries that I'd promised I would not. I was.... filled with regret, but ... I could do nothing to right these wrongs. The cross no longer looked merely like a symbol of love, but like the answer to an incurable need. The Cross no longer seemed a grotesque symbol of Divine sadism, but a remarkable act of love...Christianity began to look less strangely mythical and more cosmically beautiful.'

The cross of Christ reveals two things. First it reveals the Father's unconditional love for His people. Like the sun, His love shines on good and bad. God is entirely non violent. He does not

punish sin by violence. God does not condemn. He calls all to a total change of heart. Though we rejoice when the “bad guys” die at the end of a movie, and the good guys smile and rejoice, God is not the same. When the adulterous woman is about to be stoned by the religious leaders of his time, Jesus does not condemn the woman, but forgives and invites her to change her ways. But neither does He not condemn the leaders: “ Let the first who has not sinned, throw the first stone.” Christ thirsts for a change of heart, not revenge.

Second, the cross reveals God’s power shining through weakness. We love the superheroes of movies, who kill and destroy the enemies. God, on the contrary, loves the enemies, and challenges them to change. God’s power is not in violence, nor muscles, but in the power of the baby. Baby’s change hearts. The weak change our hearts. The broken, and fragile break open our harden hearts and create a road to friendship. Gentleness and humility are the road to human intimacy. The gatherings of movie stars at their galas, the culture of “outshining” one another, or “outdoing” one another in dress and looks, is foreign to God. This does not create friendship intimacy, but rivalry, jealousy and walls. The road of the cross, of tears, and vulnerability is God’s way to friendship. God does not overwhelm, but underwhelm.

Like a prism, which shatters the invisible light, into a visible rainbow of beauty, so the cross shatters the hardness of human hearts into a rainbow of human care and tenderness. The cross rips through our hardened hearts to unveil and show the heart of God. Imagine! The Son of God, looking into our broken hearts, hanging naked on the cross begging human beings to stop the violence, and follow His road.

**Exercise in contemplation:** Take a crucifix off the wall and put it in your hands. Look at it. Don’t think about it. Don’t analyse the pain, nor count the wounds. Don’t think about your sin. Just look at it. This is the face of the Creator. This is God showing us what He is like.

Do not think about the Lord, nor about Holy week, nor about your weaknesses. Just look, quietly, at this profound sign of God’s love. If you are distracted, just repeat the name, “Jesus”, or the short phrase, “Jesus, have mercy on me”. Look at Him who loved you so very much.

Finish by entrusting all your darkness, and the darkness of the world to Him.