

BRINGING HOME THE GOSPEL

April 5, 2020 • Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion • Matthew 26:14–27:66

Doing the Right Thing

This is one of the longest readings of the year - the story of Jesus' last hours. The reading begins with Jesus celebrating the Passover with his apostles. In the following twenty-four hours, Jesus is tortured and crucified. The stage is set for a new Passover as Jesus is laid in a borrowed tomb.

A crowd that sang out Jesus' praises only days before suddenly is shouting for his death. He is beaten, crowned with thorns, ridiculed, and spat on. He is forced to carry his cross through the city to a hillside. Nails are pounded into his wrists and feet. The cross is lifted to a standing position, and Jesus is left there to hang until he dies.

Jesus was certainly not the first or last innocent man to die for a cause or for what he believes. What was Jesus' cause? Incredibly enough, Jesus died for us: Jesus believed in us. He died so that we could be made whole and live our lives as God's extraordinarily loved and wonderfully made children. Jesus would not allow any individual or crowd, any government or religion, to contradict this truth.

Jesus was faced with the same overwhelming degree of evil we see in today's world. It never paralyzed him because he knew who he was, and what he was about. He was God's son. He lived in truth and love. Jesus confronted evil and affirmed goodness wherever he saw it. He never went further than walking distance from his home and yet he managed to change the world.

We show our gratitude to this innocent man who died for us by remembering who we are and acting accordingly. The evil and apathy in today's world will not overwhelm us if we remember who we are.

We are God's children and like Jesus we are called to live this truth and share his love by confronting evil and affirming goodness in our own sphere of influence.

FAMILY RESPONSE

Read the story of the Passion to your children from a children's Bible tell and re-tell the story in your own words, or read Matthew 26:14—27:66 to yourself. Put together your own Way of the Cross. You don't have to copy the 14 stations you have at church. As a family, you can decide on your own 14 events. Draw the pictures and make up your own prayers. When you're done, hang them on the wall and walk around making up a prayer for each station.

PERSONAL RESPONSE

Your sphere of influence includes your home and your office if you work outside the home. How can you be an influence for good? What do you want to remember from last week? What are you looking forward to next week? What are your concerns?