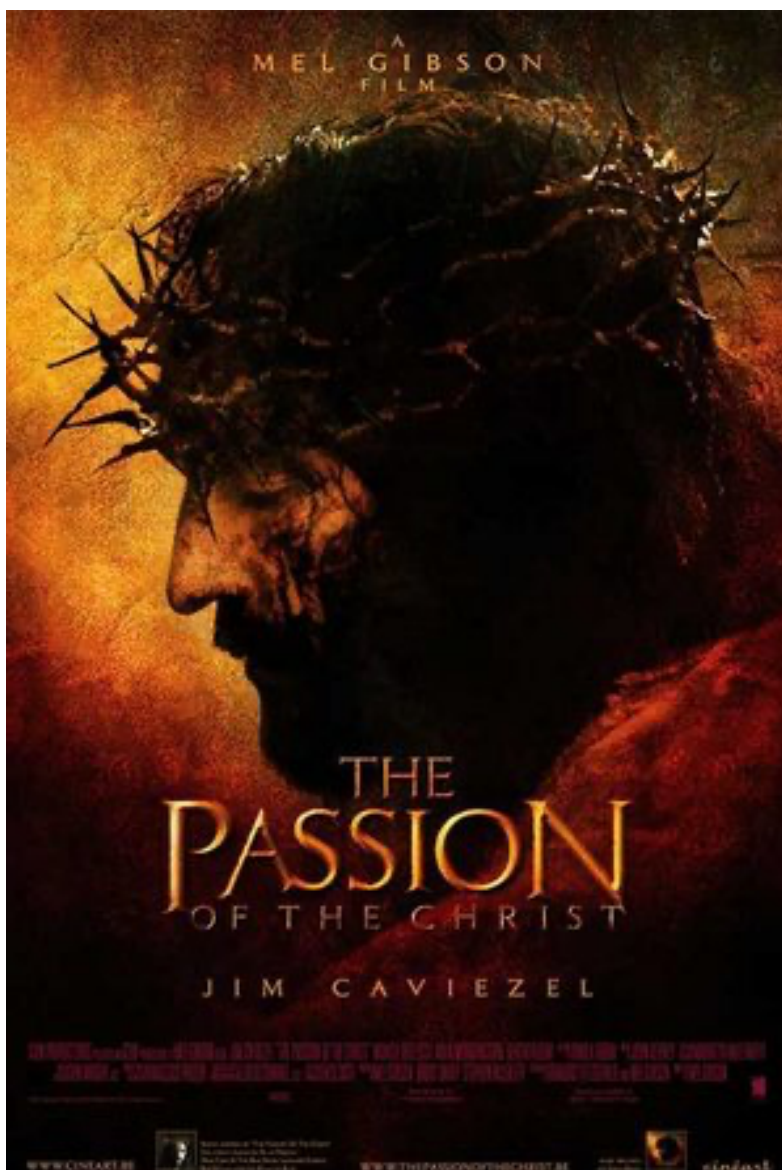


***THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST***  
**Holy Week Retreat March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024**



*'He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; by His wounds we are healed.'*  
*Isaiah 53 (6th century B.C)*

## **THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE**

Segment 1 (Time 0-16, 16 min)



-Jesus Prays in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, Luke 22:39-45)

### **Scripture Reading, Matthew 26:36-56**

<sup>36</sup>Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” <sup>37</sup>He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and began to be grieved and agitated. <sup>38</sup>Then he said to them, “My soul is deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” <sup>39</sup>And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me, yet not what I want but what you want.” <sup>40</sup>Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? <sup>41</sup>Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial;<sup>[i]</sup> the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” <sup>42</sup>Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” <sup>43</sup>Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup>So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. <sup>45</sup>Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Now the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. <sup>46</sup>Get up, let us be going. Look, my betrayer is at hand.”

<sup>47</sup>While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. <sup>48</sup>Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” <sup>49</sup>At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. <sup>50</sup>Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. <sup>51</sup>Suddenly one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. <sup>52</sup>Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword.

<sup>53</sup> Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? <sup>54</sup> But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" <sup>55</sup> At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a rebel? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. <sup>56</sup> But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

### **Reflection:**

The film begins in the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus is praying alone. Sweat rolls off his face. Satan appears to tempt him to give up, saying that no one man can bear alone what he is taking on. Jesus discovers that his disciples, whom he asked to watch with him, have fallen asleep. We, too, are tempted to run away from the challenges we have been given by God. It takes courage to stay the course when we know it will involve blood, sweat, and tears; when we have no support system and know we must go it alone. May we be inspired by the patience and the perseverance of Jesus who chose the dark night of the soul. -*Spirituality and Practice*

"Of the many lessons Jesus teaches in Gethsemane, St Matthew emphasizes two. The first is about Christ Himself. Jesus was untouched by original sin; no tendencies to selfishness marred his love or his integrity. And yet, even so, He found it humanly difficult to accept His Father's will – so difficult that St Matthew can barely find strong enough words to describe his suffering: sadness, great distress, sorrow to the point of death. His human nature, perfect and unsullied as it was, nevertheless rebelled violently and persistently at what the Father was asking him to do; God's will was utterly repugnant to Him on a natural level. What comfort we find in this simple fact! Now we can be certain that life's ubiquitous obstacles, difficulties, and sufferings fit inside God's Providence. If even Christ, if even Mary had to travel a hard road, we have no reason to think that our hardships will obstruct our spiritual growth. Christ's sufferings set us free from the vain but tempting ideal of a life without difficulty.

Second, Jesus teaches us the secret to persevering in the path of holiness and happiness. When His vocation weighs Him down and His human will resists the demands of His mission, He seeks solace and strength in prayer. Prayer foils the devil. Prayer conquers evil. Prayer frees the soul to achieve the purpose for which it was created. But prayer is demanding too. Jesus Himself had to persevere; three times He went off to pray and came back. The disciples did not persist, and they will soon abandon their Lord. Prayer is necessary, but its fruitfulness depends on an attitude of docility, on watchfulness, on self-mastery – "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." A heart that seeks God in prayer will not get very far unless it decides to heed what it hears from the Lord." -Father John Bartunek, *The Better Part* Page 307-308

### **Questions for Reflection**

1. Why is it so hard for us to accept life's sufferings and difficulties?
2. Jesus asked His Father to change the plan, but when the Father didn't, Jesus accepted it fully. What can this teach me about prayer?

## **TRIAL BEFORE CAIAPHAS AND SANHEDRIN**

Segment 2 (Time 16-38, 22 min)



-Trial of Jesus (Matthew 26:57-58, Mark 14:53-65, Luke 22:66-71, John 18:12-24)

### **Scripture Reading, John 18:12-24**

<sup>12</sup>So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him. <sup>13</sup>First they took him to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. <sup>14</sup>Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it was better to have one person die for the people.

<sup>15</sup>Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, <sup>16</sup>but Peter was standing outside at the gate. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who guarded the gate, and brought Peter in. <sup>17</sup>The woman said to Peter, “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said, “I am not.”<sup>18</sup>Now the slaves and the police had made a charcoal fire because it was cold, and they were standing around it and warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

<sup>19</sup>Then the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. <sup>20</sup>Jesus answered, “I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. <sup>21</sup>Why do you ask me? Ask those who heard what I said to them; they know what I said.” <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, one of the police standing nearby struck Jesus on the face, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?”<sup>23</sup>Jesus answered, “If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong. But if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” <sup>24</sup>Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

<sup>25</sup> Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They asked him, “You are not also one of his disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not.” <sup>26</sup> One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, “Did I not see you in the garden with him?” <sup>27</sup> Again Peter denied it, and at that moment the cock crowed.

## Reflection

Over the centuries, many commentators on the life of Christ have pointed out that the greatest tragedy of all is the suicide of Judas. How many times have we betrayed someone because they did not live up to our high expectations or share our dreams for the future? Have we, like the children following Judas, ever taunted someone in confusion or despair? O Creator of the Universe, we feel nothing but the deepest sorrow for those who have taken their own lives out of feelings of deep self-loathing or failure. May we be the ones to be present in love, even as Jesus was, to those who are perched on the edge of peril.

*-Spirituality and Practice*

The forces of evil – led by Satan – torment Judas, trying to prevent his regret from maturing into humble repentance. Using the demonic children was another way to manifest the film’s conception of evil as something good gone horribly wrong. The children connote innocence, loyalty, docility; the demonic twist connotes lost innocence, lost loyalty, lost docility – losses that Satan uses to drive Judas to the brink of despair. When the moment of decision comes however, the devil disappears, the children disappear and Judas is left alone, free either to take the last step on his frantic and useless flight away from the truth, or to entrust himself to God’s mercy. The sight of the donkey, an image of hell, pushes Judas over the edge and he yields to despair.

The parallel to Judas is Peter, one of Jesus’ closest disciples. When some threatening bystanders accuse him of being one of Jesus’ followers, he vehemently denies even knowing Jesus. This happens three times. He has betrayed Jesus too. Realizing what has happened, Peter flees. A moment later when he runs into Mary, Peter finds the strength to accept his failure, to repent, to admit his sin. Mary’s look echoes Jesus’, and she accepts Peter’s repentance in Jesus’ place, since Peter can’t go to ask Jesus directly. The Gospels don’t record this specific encounter between Mary and Peter, but it emphasizes the contrast between Peter and Judas, bringing into sharper relief the message of hope taught by Christ’s reactions to betrayals. What saved Peter from despair, why did he have the “right disposition” and Judas didn’t? The flashback after Peter’s denial provides a clue. Jesus had predicted Peter’s denial at the Last Supper, just as He had predicted Judas’ betrayal. Peter realizes that the prediction has come true. As he looks into Christ’s bruised and swollen eyes, it dawns on Peter that Jesus knows all along how weak he really was, how arrogant and conceited. And yet, even knowing that, Jesus never pulled back His love. Becoming aware of Christ’s unconditional love for him is what saved Peter from despair. Christ’s love bred Peter’s hope. -Father John Bartunek, *Inside the Passion*, Pg 42-45

## Questions for Reflection

1. What do you think pained Christ’s heart more, Peter’s betrayal or Judas’ betrayal?
2. In what situations am I most easily tempted to deny Jesus by word or action?

## **TRIAL BEFORE PILATE**

Segment 3 (Time 38-52, 14 min)



-Trial (Matthew 27:11-25, Mark 15:1-14, Luke 23:1-7 and 13-25, John 18:28-40 and 19:4-16)

### **Scripture Reading, John 18:28-40**

<sup>28</sup> Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. <sup>29</sup> So Pilate went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" <sup>30</sup> They answered, "If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you." <sup>31</sup> Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law." The Jews replied, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death." <sup>32</sup> (This was to fulfill what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

<sup>33</sup> Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered, "Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?" <sup>35</sup> Pilate replied, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" <sup>36</sup> Jesus answered, "My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." <sup>37</sup> Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." <sup>38</sup> Pilate asked him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, "I find no case against him."<sup>39</sup> But you have a custom that I release someone for you at the Passover. Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?" <sup>40</sup> They shouted in reply, "Not this man but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a rebel.

## Reflection

We have all played the role of Pontius Pilate at one time or another. We choose what is expedient and then wash our hands of any guilt. In Pilate's act, contrasted in the film with Jesus' washing the feet of his disciples, we see the nefarious deeds of all those who try to hide behind the plea "I was only doing my duty." It is hard to calculate the injustices done to the human spirit throughout history by people playing institutional games and protecting themselves in the process. May the Master of the Universe tutor us in the art of seeking the truth and upholding the dignity of all human beings. – *Spirituality and Practice*

Two moments during Jesus' appearance before Pilate deserve special attention. When Jesus first arrives in the courtyard below Pilate's throne, He looks up into the sky and sees a white dove. The glimpse of the dove, a sign of the Father's solicitude, calls to mind a phrase from one of the Bible's most well-known passages: "The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing...For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me." (Psalm 22:1,4) Fewer valleys could be as dark as the one Jesus was walking through during His Passion. Seeing God's peace hovering above Him drives home the lesson of hope, one of the key themes of the movie.

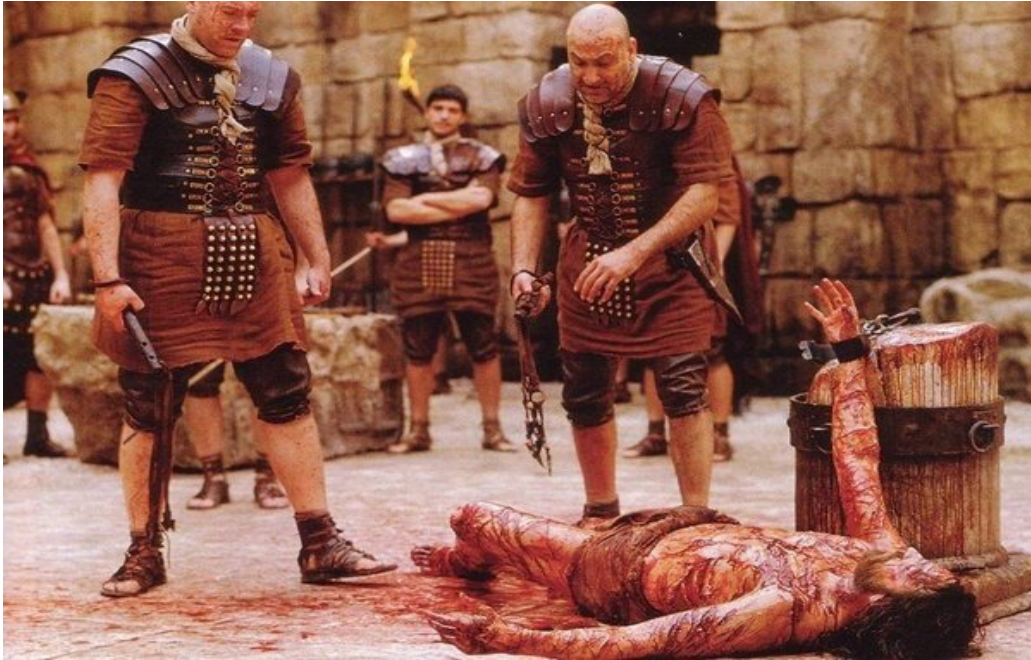
The second moment occurs when Pilate offers the crowd a choice between freeing Barabbas or freeing Jesus. Close-ups of the two condemned men leave no doubt about who deserves pardon. When Barabbas is chosen, Pilate reluctantly releases him. The camera immediately focuses on Jesus, who seems to gasp in disappointment. We see Jesus' face again, in another close-up, as Barabbas makes his way down the stairs. It exhibits no resentment or anxiety. Jesus simply looks deeply into Barabbas's eyes, disconcerting him. Jesus is more interested in drawing a lost soul into His heart than saving His own life. -*Inside the Passion*, Pg 77-78

## Reflection Questions

1. Pilate committed an injustice to protect his personal ambitions. In what ways are we tempted to do the same?
2. How should being a citizen of Christ's Kingdom affect our lives on earth?

## **SCOURGING OF JESUS**

Segment 4 (52-1:12, 20 min)



Scourging of Jesus (Matthew 27:26, Mark 15:15, John 19:1-16)

Jesus is crowned with thorns (Matthew 27:29, Mark 15:17, John 19:2)

### **Scripture Reading, John 19:1-16**

**19** Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.<sup>2</sup> And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. <sup>3</sup>They kept coming up to him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and striking him on the face.<sup>4</sup> Pilate went out again and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no case against him.” <sup>5</sup>So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” <sup>6</sup>When the chief priests and the police saw him, they shouted, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him; I find no case against him.” <sup>7</sup>The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has claimed to be the Son of God.”

<sup>8</sup> Now when Pilate heard this, he was more afraid than ever. <sup>9</sup> He entered his headquarters again and asked Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. <sup>10</sup> Pilate therefore said to him, “Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and power to crucify you?” <sup>11</sup> Jesus answered him, “You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” <sup>12</sup> From then on Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, “If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar. Everyone who claims to be a king sets himself against Caesar.”

<sup>13</sup> When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside and sat on the judge’s bench at a place called The Stone Pavement, or in Hebrew, Gabbatha. <sup>14</sup> Now it was the day of Preparation



for the Passover, and it was about noon. He said to the Jews, “Here is your King!” <sup>15</sup>They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” <sup>16</sup>Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

### **Reflection**

Jesus is arrested in the Garden and beaten as he is taken to be judged by the Jewish authorities in an illegal, nighttime meeting with not all council members present. We think of all the innocents dragged from their homes and friends at night and imprisoned without a proper trial. The scenes of Jesus being scourged draw out our feelings of compassion for all victims of torture and abuse around the world in prisons, interrogation centres, and dark alleys. Yet we also recognize that we ourselves are often fascinated by violence and have known some of the blood lust exhibited by the soldiers and the crowds yelling for more. May God have mercy on us for ignoring the plight of the victims of violence and for denying the existence within ourselves of the tendency to inflict pain out of anger, frustration, or just to go along with the crowd. -*Spirituality and Practice*

“The overriding sentiment when one witnesses this brutal sequence is disbelief. It couldn’t have been that horrible, could it? Was it necessary to show so much violence? From a Christian perspective, none of the violence is gratuitous. The purpose is not to make viewers squirm. It is there because that’s what Jesus suffered. Those are wounds that heal. It really happened, and so, the film seems to say, if God let it happen, there must be a reason for it. What is the reason? Few would claim to understand. Christian doctrine teaches that God suffered for every human being, that He freely chose to endure extreme physical violence for the salvation of sinners. What does such a decision indicate? The fact that someone would willingly take on such excessive torment demonstrates an extreme intensity of love – God’s love.

Before the guards drag Jesus away from the flagellation loggia, He has a flashback. Out of the corner of His eye, Jesus sees one of His torturer’s sandals, sprinkled with His own blood. It reminds Him of other sandals – His apostles. During the Last Supper, the Gospels record that the Apostles were talking amongst themselves about the positions they were going to occupy when Christ came into His Kingdom (they still hadn’t understood the true nature of Christ’s Kingdom). Jesus decided to use the occasion to teach them a lesson in Christian leadership. He got up from the table, wrapped a towel around His waist, and proceeded to wash His Apostle’s feet. Christ’s sacrifice of His dignity and His life during the Passion (symbolized by the spilling of His blood), is an act of service for all men and women of all times and places, even for those who are torturing Him at the time. His blood spattering on His enemy’s sandals is the extension, the fulfillment even, of the washing of His Apostles feet, His ultimate act of self-sacrificing service to the human race. His obedience to the Father, the shedding of His blood, will cleanse the human race of its disobedience to God, and bring them back into friendship with God.” - *Inside the Passion*, 91-104

### **Reflection Questions**

1. Am I able to recognize Christ’s love and providence in every event and relationship in my life? Where have I failed to see Christ’s love and providence in my life?

## **JESUS CARRIES HIS CROSS**

Segment 5 (Time 1:12-1:31, 19 min)



Jesus Carries His Cross (John 19:17)

Simon of Cyrene forced to carry Jesus' cross (Matthew 27:32, Luke 23:26)

I am the Good Shepherd (John 10:14-18)

### **Scripture Reading, Matthew 27:31-32**

<sup>31</sup>After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.<sup>32</sup>As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. <sup>33</sup>And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), <sup>34</sup>they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. <sup>35</sup>And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots;<sup>36</sup>then they sat down there and kept watch over him. <sup>37</sup>Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

## Reflection

Our hearts go out to all those who carry a cross in our times: the poor, the homeless, displaced refugees, addicts of all types, the mentally ill, the victims of child abuse and rape, and all others who stumble and fall repeatedly. May the Holy One lighten their burden with the knowledge that they are not alone, that others care and hope for their recovery.

*-Spirituality and Practice*

The film heightens the meaning of Christ's falls by demonstrating the effect they have on certain individuals around Him; the moments of dire weakness produce strength in others.

Mary;

The crowd closes in behind Jesus as He moves forward, and Mary is pushed back; she can't see Him. She turns to John, "Get me close to Him." John knows the streets well, leading Mary and Magdalene out of the crowd, down a side street, and back up to the main route where Jesus will pass. Mary presses through the crowd and puts her arms around Jesus and says, "I'm here." She repeats: "I'm here." The first time the words are desperate, the second time, sweet. All she needs to do is simply be there for Him. That is a mother's love; that is Mary's faith. Jesus rewards her gesture of love, strengthening her even as she strengthens Him, by reminding her of the meaning behind His hideous torture. Rising to His feet, He looks her in the eye and says, "Behold Mother, I make all things new!" This quote is taken from the last book of the New Testament, the book of Revelation 21:5. It refers to the final victory of Christ over evil, the end of history when He will come again. Jesus reminds Mary that suffering is not the end of the story. Rather, it is the path to freedom and eternal joy for her and for all sinners.





Veronica;

Veronica wiped Jesus' face with her veil, a courageous act of kindness and compassion in the midst of Jesus' terrible journey. Christ rewarded her by leaving His image on the veil through the stain of His blood and sweat. The veil symbolizes Christ's intimate, personal love for His disciples, and His approval of every self-sacrificing act of kindness and service. St Veronica has inspired generations of Christians to imitate her charity by serving their suffering neighbours. Some of the earliest Christian sermons still in existence elaborate on the idea that in Christ's Passion God made Himself weak on purpose, so that He would have to depend on others, calling forth in them the courage of love and faith, just as He did for Veronica. Christ continues to imprint His portrait, not on a veil, but on compassionate hearts.

Simon of Cyrene

No one follows Christ so closely throughout the sequence as Simon of Cyrene, the innocent bystander recruited to help Jesus carry His cross. And no one is so reluctant to do so. He wants nothing to do with a condemned man on the eve of a religious holiday.

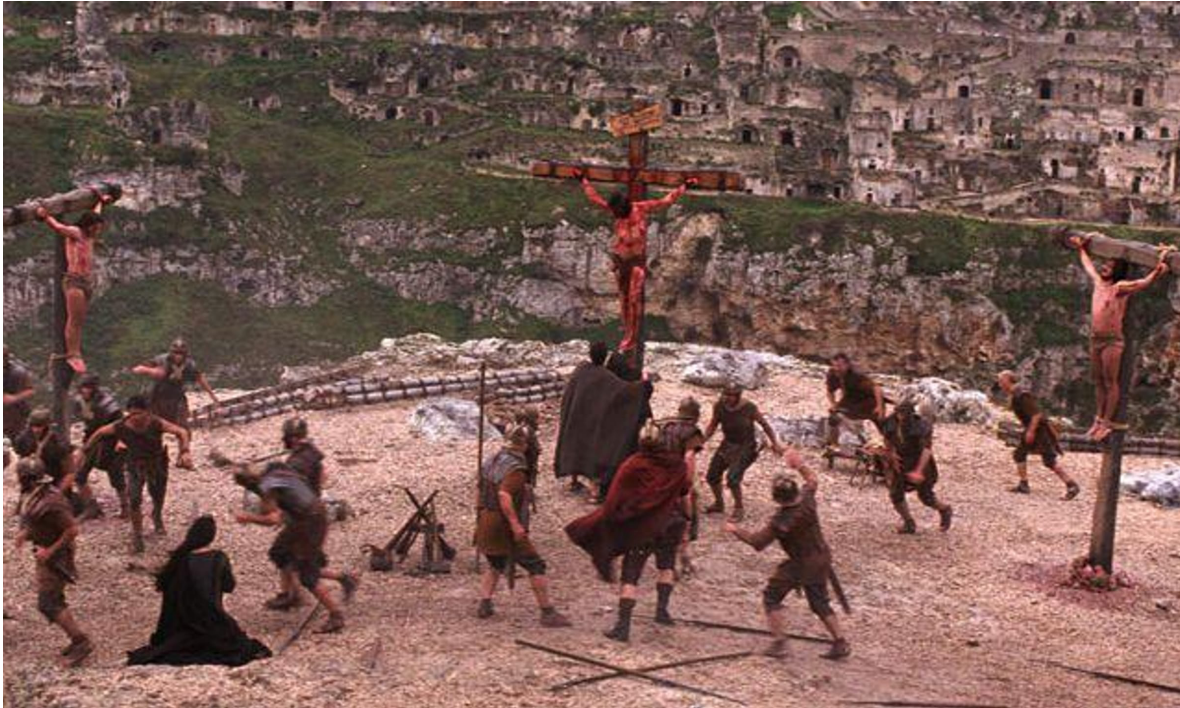
Simon is a compelling character. He represents all of us. He doesn't want to step out of his comfort zone and into a costly relationship with Jesus. He sees it going on and he doesn't want to be there. He recognizes the danger and the humiliation and worries about what people will think. Jesus gives Simon a look, right from His heart. And Simon gets it. He gets what Jesus is about – love, self-sacrifice. It's as if Jesus lights up something inside of Simon. At the end Simon can't tear himself away. The guards tell him to get out, but he stays there, staring at Jesus. Carrying the cross with Christ changed him. It taught him about real love, love that gives until it hurts. That experience made a believer of him; Christ's love gave him faith. It was Simon's experience, and it can be anyone's. *-Inside the Passion, Pg 120-125*

## Reflection Questions

1. Which person on the Way of the Cross do I relate to most closely, and why? What can I learn from their witness? And the witness of the others?

## **CRUCIFIXION AND DEATH OF JESUS**

Segment 6 (Time 1:31-1:55, 24 minutes)



Crucifixion of Jesus (Matthew 27:34-56, Mark 15:24-41, Luke 23:33-49, John 19: 17-37)

### **Scripture Reading, John 19:17-37**

So they took Jesus,<sup>17</sup> and carrying the cross by himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew<sup>[a]</sup> is called Golgotha.<sup>18</sup> There they crucified him and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.<sup>19</sup> Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth,<sup>[a]</sup> the King of the Jews.”<sup>20</sup> Many of the Jews read this inscription because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew,<sup>[a]</sup> in Latin, and in Greek.<sup>21</sup> Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘This man said, I am King of the Jews.’”<sup>22</sup> Pilate answered, “What I have written I have written.”<sup>23</sup> When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top.<sup>24</sup> So they said to one another, “Let us not tear it but cast lots for it to see who will get it.” This was to fulfill what the scripture says,

“They divided my clothes among themselves,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.”

<sup>25</sup> And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. <sup>26</sup>When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." <sup>27</sup>Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

<sup>28</sup>After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), "I am thirsty." <sup>29</sup>A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. <sup>30</sup>When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

<sup>31</sup>Since it was the day of Preparation, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the cross during the Sabbath, especially because that Sabbath was a day of great solemnity. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of the crucified men broken and the bodies removed. <sup>32</sup>Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. <sup>33</sup>But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. <sup>34</sup>Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. <sup>35</sup>(He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows<sup>[a]</sup> that he tells the truth, so that you also may continue<sup>[b]</sup> to believe.)<sup>36</sup>These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, "None of his bones shall be broken." <sup>37</sup>And again another passage of scripture says, "They will look on the one whom they have pierced."

## Reflection

According to the Gospel accounts, all of Christ's seven last words seem to have been uttered from Jesus on the cross, but the film has Jesus speaking the first one – "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" – while they are still nailing Him to the cross. He can't get the whole line out because He is writhing in such pain, but He can still say more than once, "They don't know...They don't know...." Why is he shown saying this line before the cross was elevated? The answer is that Christ would have been saying that phrase the whole time, during the whole length of the Passion. The entire point of the sacrifice is so that sins can be forgiven.

It is important to realize that God's forgiveness is being enacted at the very moment when they are torturing and condemning Him. That is what the Passion is all about; it is the revelation of God's love, which in turn is the source of Christian faith and hope. When Caiaphas hears Jesus' response, he "stops dead in his tracks. He "slowly turns, looks at Jesus with amazement", as the screenplay elaborates. It is a critical moment – the first time anything Jesus has said or done has penetrated Caiaphas' heart or even made any kind of impression on him at all. It is a glimmer of hope for Caiaphas, sparked by a word of forgiveness. -*Inside the Passion*, Pg 152-153

## Reflection Questions

1. In what ways have I given and received forgiveness in my life?
2. Jesus saved the world through self-sacrifice. What role does self-sacrifice have in our own lives? What does self-sacrifice look like in our concrete life-situations?

## **JESUS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS**

Segment 7 (Time 1:55-1:59, 4 minutes)



Jesus Taken Down (Matthew 27:59-60, Mark 15:46, Luke 24:53, John 19:38-40)

### **Scripture Reading, John 19:38-40**

<sup>38</sup>After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and removed his body. <sup>39</sup>Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. <sup>40</sup>They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. <sup>41</sup>Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden, there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. <sup>42</sup>And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

## Reflection

Mary the Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and John the Beloved Disciple follow Jesus on the way of sorrows. Despite the danger facing them, they stand under the cross at the place of execution. Jesus with a look demonstrates his nurturing love for his mother and puts her under John's care. May we demonstrate devotion to those who stand by us in all circumstances. -*Spirituality and Practice*

The Calvary sequence is completed with the last shot of Jesus being taken down from the cross, lying lifeless, in His mother's arms. She looks at Him with unspeakable sorrow and unquenchable love, and then she looks at the camera, at the audience.

What is she saying with that look? She is saying, 'Don't forget. Don't forget. He did it for you.' That is the real message of the film. It is an act of unforgetting. It is an act of *aletheia* (a Greek word translated as *truth*, but its literal meaning is *un-forgetting*). In the film, Mary looks straight out at us. The movie draws to a close provoking a full and conscious acknowledgement of whom this suffering has been for. *Inside the Passion 168*

"The Passion will crush Jesus in every possible way; indeed, it will destroy Him insofar as human eyes can tell. And yet His obliteration will be like the crushing of grapes, a destruction that horribly disfigures the fruit's original shape and integrity yet only to transform it into an inebriating elixir of life for others to drink and rejoice in ecstatically. God can use men's evil intentions to achieve magnificent ends. If he could not, would he still be the omnipotent, wise, and loving Creator of all? The constant marvel throughout, the unfathomable divine mystery that provides the key to the Passion and the Cross, is this truth of revelation: that, at the threshold of the Passion, the Father – whose love for his only-begotten Son is the very foundation of both the Godhead and of all creation – does not love us sinners less than he loves the one Son. This astounding truth is shown in the fact that the Father delivers up His tenderly beloved Son, his One and Only, up to death, so that through the lavish squandering of the Son's being we might all have divine life."  
-Ersasmo Leiva-Merikakis, *Fire of Mercy, Heart of the Word*, Pg 238

## Reflection Questions

1. In what ways do we keep the remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for us?