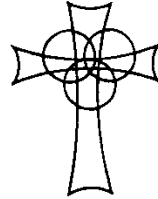


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*A Member Congregation of*  
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**The Sacred Season of Lent 2020**  
**“Eyes on Jesus”**

**Midweek Lenten Devotions and Bible Study**  
**The Fifth Wednesday of Lent**  
**The Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lord**  
**March 25, 2020**

**Service of the Word in the Season of Lent**

✠ *Jesus, Mercy!* ✠

The Opening Versicles:

*Psalms 70:1 and 39:13*

- P** O God, make speed to save us.  
**C** O Lord, make haste to help us.
- P** Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear to my cry;  
**C** hold not Your peace at my tears.

- P** <sup>1</sup>Why, O LORD, do you stand afar off?  
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?
- C** <sup>2</sup>**In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor;  
let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised.**
- P** <sup>3</sup>For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul,  
and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD.
- C** <sup>4</sup>**In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him;  
all his thoughts are, “There is no God.”**
- P** <sup>5</sup>His ways prosper at all times;  
your judgments are on high, out of his sight;  
as for all his foes, he puffs at them.
- C** <sup>6</sup>**He says in his heart, “I shall not be moved;  
throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity.”**
- P** <sup>7</sup>His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression;  
under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.
- C** <sup>8</sup>**He sits in ambush in the villages;  
in hiding places he murders the innocent.**
- P** His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless;  
<sup>9</sup>he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket;
- C** **he lurks that he may seize the poor;  
he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net.**
- P** <sup>10</sup>The helpless are crushed,  
sink down, and fall by his might.
- C** <sup>11</sup>**He says in his heart, “God has forgotten,  
he has hidden his face, he will never see it.”**
- P** <sup>12</sup>Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand;  
forget not the afflicted.
- C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

- L** A reading from the Passion according to Saint Mark.

<sup>1</sup>It was now two days before the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him, ...

<sup>53</sup>And they led Jesus to the high priest. And all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. <sup>54</sup>And Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he was sitting with the guards and warming himself at the fire. <sup>55</sup>Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they found none. <sup>56</sup>For many bore false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. <sup>57</sup>And some stood up and bore false witness against him, saying, <sup>58</sup>“We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’” <sup>59</sup>Yet even about this their testimony did not agree. <sup>60</sup>And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?” <sup>61</sup>But he remained silent and made no answer. Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” <sup>62</sup>And Jesus said, “I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven.” <sup>63</sup>And the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further witnesses do we need? <sup>64</sup>You have heard his blasphemy. What is your decision?” And they all condemned him as deserving death. <sup>65</sup>And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophesy!” And the guards received him with blows.

**L** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

The Scripture Study for the Day

*“Murderous Eyes”*

*Introduction:*

The chief priests and scribes saw Jesus as an obstacle to be rid of by violence. The hatred that leads to murdering one’s neighbor was as old as Cain killing his innocent brother Abel. The Jewish leaders refused to believe that the source of all murderous thoughts is Satan, who “was a murderer from the beginning” and “the father of lies” (John 8:44). Yet during the Passover festival, their murderous plans for Jesus would unwittingly bring about the Father’s sacrifice of the ultimate Passover Lamb.

*Questions:*

1. Read John 11:45–53. Why were the Jewish leaders concerned about Jesus continuing His active ministry? How did God make good use Caiaphas’s ruthless plan?

*John 11:45-53*

<sup>45</sup> Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him, <sup>46</sup> but some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. <sup>47</sup> So the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the council and said, “What are we to do? For this man performs many signs. <sup>48</sup> If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation.” <sup>49</sup> But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing at all. <sup>50</sup> Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should

perish.”<sup>51</sup> He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation,<sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.<sup>53</sup> So from that day on they made plans to put him to death.

2. Why was it so problematic for the Jewish leaders that the “testimony [against Jesus] did not agree” (Mark 14:56)? See Deuteronomy 17:6 and 19:15.

*Deuteronomy 17:6*

<sup>6</sup> On the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

*Deuteronomy 19:15*

<sup>15</sup> “A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established.

3. What does Proverbs 19:9 say about breaking the Eighth Commandment? What does this reveal about those who testified against Jesus? Who stands behind this commandment (and all of them)? See Deuteronomy 19:16–20.

*Proverbs 19:9*

<sup>9</sup> A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will perish.

*Deuteronomy 19:16-20*

<sup>16</sup> If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing,<sup>17</sup> then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days.<sup>18</sup> The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely,<sup>19</sup> then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.<sup>20</sup> And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil among you.

4. What was Jesus actually referring to when He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”? See John 2:19–21.

*John 2:19-21*

<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” <sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple,<sup>[a]</sup> and will you raise it up in three days?” <sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body.

5. Jesus responds to the high priest’s query with the words “I am” (Mark 14:62). Why is the significance of this greater than if Jesus had answered merely “Yes”? See Exodus 3:13–15 and John 8:56–59.

*Exodus 3:13-15*

<sup>13</sup> Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”

<sup>14</sup> God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” <sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

*John 8:56-59*

<sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad.” <sup>57</sup> So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” <sup>58</sup> Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” <sup>59</sup> So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

6. The high priest asserts that Jesus’ words are self-evident blasphemy. Why were Jesus’ words music to the high priest’s ears? See Leviticus 24:16.

*Leviticus 24:16*

<sup>16</sup> Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death.

7. How does the spitting and the striking of Jesus by the mob fulfill Scripture? See Isaiah 50:4–9. How does this passage show that the disgrace suffered by the Lord’s servant will not end in defeat?

*Isaiah 50:4-9*

<sup>4</sup>The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. <sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backward. <sup>6</sup>I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. <sup>7</sup>But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame. <sup>8</sup>He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. <sup>9</sup>Behold, the Lord GOD helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

8. Read 1 John 3:11–15. How does this passage show that none of us passes muster before God on the basis of the Fifth Commandment? How does the murder of Jesus at the hands of the Jewish leaders comfort us in the face of this revelation?

*1 John 3:11-15*

<sup>11</sup>For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. <sup>12</sup>We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup>Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you. <sup>14</sup>We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. <sup>15</sup>Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

*Conclusion:*

Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:43–45). Our hatred of others has rendered us no less guilty than the Jewish leaders whose murderous hearts led them to hand Jesus over to the Romans for execution. May we find comfort in the fact that God the Father has been kind to us rebellious sinners and has accomplished the full forgiveness of all our sins through the murder of His innocent Son.

The Prayers:

**P** In penitence and faith let us make our prayer to the Father and to ask for His mercy and grace.

For Your holy people, that they may, with Your aid, resist evil and grow in grace, we pray to You, O Lord:

**C** **Lord, graciously hear us.**

**P** For all those preparing for Baptism and confirmation, that they may live by every word that proceeds from Your mouth,

we pray to You, O Lord:

**C** **Lord, graciously hear us.**

**P** For the leaders of the nations, that You will guide them in the ways of mercy and truth,

we pray to You, O Lord:

**C** **Lord, graciously hear us.**

**P** For the needy, that they may not be forgotten, nor the hope of the poor be taken away,

we pray to You, O Lord:

**C** **Lord, graciously hear us.**

**P** For the sick in body, mind, and spirit, that they may know Your power to heal, we pray to You, O Lord:

**C** **Lord, graciously hear us.**

**P** For the poor in spirit, that they may inherit the kingdom of heaven and see You face to face,

we pray to You, O Lord:

**C** **Lord, graciously hear us.**

**P** Let us commend the world, for which Christ suffered, to the mercy and protection of God, offering up to Him our prayers either silently or aloud.

*Open prayer may be offered and silence is kept.*



The Lord's Prayer:

**P** Taught by our Lord and trusting His promises, we are bold to pray:

**C** **Our Father who art in heaven,**  
    **hallowed be Thy name,**  
    **Thy kingdom come,**  
    **Thy will be done on earth**  
    **as it is in heaven;**  
    **give us this day our daily bread;**  
    **and forgive us our trespasses**  
    **as we forgive those**  
    **who trespass against us;**  
    **and lead us not into temptation,**  
    **but deliver us from evil.**  
**For Thine is the kingdom**  
    **and the power and the glory**  
    **forever and ever. Amen.**

The Collect of the Week:

**P** Let us pray.  
Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Your mercies are new every morning; and though we deserve only punishment, You receive us as Your children and provide for all our needs of body and soul. Grant that we may heartily acknowledge Your merciful goodness, give thanks for all Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen.**

The Collect for the Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lord:

**P** O Lord, as we have known the Incarnation of Your Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of the angel to the Virgin Mary, so by the message of His cross and passion bring us to the glory of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** **Amen.**

The Collect for the Lenten Season:

**P** Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C** **Amen.**



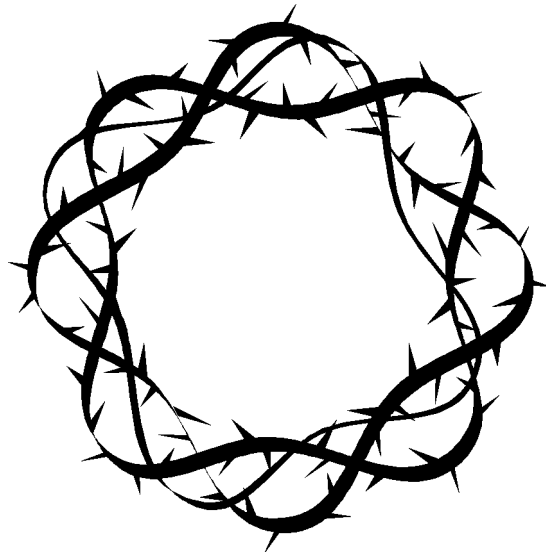
The Closing Prayer:

*Ignatius of Loyola (1556)*

- P** We pray:
- C** **Teach us, good Lord, to serve You as You deserve;  
to give and not to count the cost;  
to fight and not to heed the wounds;  
to toil and not to seek for rest;  
to labor and not to seek for any reward,  
save that of knowing that we do Your will. Amen.**

The Benediction:

- P** The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve us.
- C** **Amen.**



### Acknowledgments

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