Study Notes for the Sunday Mass Published by Christians for Christ Ministries. We are a non-denominational Christian ministry that seeks to encourage and facilitate Christians in studying the Holy Scriptures. **"For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus."** 1 Timothy 2:5

Mass Study Notes for Sunday, 3-20-2016



Welcome back to the Sunday Mass notes for **3-20-2016, Easter Sunday**. This week we open the reading with the procession of the palms. Then we move to the first reading that gives us a glimpse of the Suffering Servant, the Messiah. The second reading shows the humility of Jesus, who came to fulfill the Old Testament prophecy of the Messiah having to suffer. Finally, we conclude with the Gospel account of Jesus' passion, our Messiah, Who paid the penalty for our sin.

Reading at the Procession of the Palms

Luke 19:28-40 NAS95 28 After He had said these things, He was going on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 When He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. 31 "If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say, 'The Lord has need of it.'" 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as He had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 They said, "The Lord has need of it." 35 They brought it to Jesus, and they threw their coats on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36 As He was going, they were spreading their coats on the road. 37 As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen, 38 shouting: "BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples." 40 But Jesus answered, "I tell you, if these become

silent, the stones will cry out!"

The time around Passover was a season of messianic expectancy, and there were many pilgrims in the city for the celebration. One of the issues that was fresh in the mind of the people was Jesus' raising of Lazarus from the dead just shortly before this last Passover (John 11:1-45). This would have played into His sudden popularity and for the people's desire to see Him. In messianic form, Jesus directed His disciples with exact precision, and when they followed His orders, everything worked out exactly as Jesus had said. Jesus asserted His authority over Jerusalem by riding into the city on a colt (v. 30, Mark 11:4), not a mighty stallion as would have been done by kings. This was in fulfillment of a prophecy from Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9). Evidently, according to Saint Matthew's narrative, Jesus rode on the colt and the donkey (it's mother) walked alongside.

The procession of the palms dealt with Jesus' first coming. As we look forward to the celebration of Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday, let's look briefly at Jesus' second coming. The Book of Revelation revealed some of the details about Jesus' physical return to the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation period. Jesus entered Jerusalem during His First Advent on a donkey. Read what the Scripture says about how He will return the second time.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." (Revelation 19:11-16).

Jesus came the first time as a humble, unblemished Lamb (Revelation 13:8). However, Jesus will return the second time as the glorious Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5). He will return as the Almighty Warrior on a white horse, not a donkey as happened the first time. At His First Coming, many people missed His appearance. According to John, at His Second Coming He will not be missed. John said, "BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen" (Rev 1:7). When the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (v.16b) returns, He will come in judgment to a people living "as in the days of Noah" (Matthew 24:37) expecting things to continue as they always have in the past. Since God has given us this warning, we must ask ourselves "How now shall we live?" While ignorance seems to be bliss, it does not lead to eternal life.

This Sunday as we celebrate Jesus' triumphal entrance in Jerusalem at His First Advent, we can celebrate that we are among those that did, in a sense, welcome Jesus to Jerusalem as King of Kings

and Lord of Lords. We can celebrate that we are not among those who missed His first coming. As we hold our palms, we can proudly celebrate our belief that King Jesus will one day return to the earth he created. In our waving of the palms, we can lift them up as white flags of surrender to the King who deserves our whole lives.

Introduction to the First Reading:

The first reading after the procession of the palms is from Isaiah 50. The context is just after Isaiah told about how God had disciplined the northern tribes of Israel (Isaiah 50:1-3). We see that God judged Israel's sinfulness, but then also provided a way for salvation in this prediction of the Messiah. The picture painted in the verses leading up to today's reading is one of temporarily setting aside this group of God's chosen people until they come to believe in God's sending of the Messiah. The prophecy shifts to the personalization of the Messiah's suffering, which we will also be reading about in greater detail during the Gospel narrative covering the Passion of Jesus Christ.

First Reading:

Isaiah 50:4-7 NAS95 4 The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples, That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple. 5 The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not disobedient Nor did I turn back. 6 I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting. 7 For the Lord GOD helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.

In this reading, the Prophet Isaiah speaks of himself as a "type" of Christ. Christ the Messiah has been given the Word of God, something that "sustains a weary one with a word" (v. 4). The Messiah is obedient (v. 5), even giving His back to those who strike Him and His "cheeks to those who pluck out [His] beard" (v. 6). God darkened the skies during the spiritually dark event of Jesus' suffering, and Jesus "set [His] face like flint" and wasn't ashamed (v. 7) to fulfil God's will in giving His life for us. Later in the Gospel lesson, we will read about the fulfillment of the suffering of God's servant (Is. 50:6 "scourged" and "spat upon") in great detail.

Introduction to the Second Reading:

The predicted suffering from Isaiah is also the backdrop for the second reading, which was probably sung as a hymn in the early Church about the great lengths that Jesus went to in order to fulfill the Father's plan for our salvation.

Second Reading:

Philippians 2:6-11 NAS95 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by

becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This passage continues the sharp contrast that the Bible portrays between Jesus' first Advent and His second coming. The first advent He came as a humble servant. In this act of the incarnation and His death, He not only served His Father, but he served us. Humankind was in desperate need of a Savior, owing a sin debt beyond the ability to repay. So He became the suffering Servant "for the joy set before Him" (Hebrews 12:2), paying our debt on the cross. By being obedient to the Father, He will come again in exaltation and power (as we saw in Revelation earlier). The second coming will be very different from the first Advent. In addition to every eye seeing his second coming, this passage informs us that every knee will bow, voluntarily or involuntarily. The choice is ours to make. We can voluntarily bow our knee to the Messiah now, or we can harden our hearts against Him, only to involuntarily bow when He returns.

Introduction to the Gospel Reading:

The Gospel Reading is Luke's account of the passion, which includes the betrayal, arrest, trial, torture, humiliation, crucifixion and burial of Jesus.

Gospel Reading:

Luke 22:14 – 23:56 NAS95 14 When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him. 15 And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And when He had taken some bread and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood. 21 "But behold, the hand of the one betraying Me is with Mine on the table. 22 "For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!" 23 And they began to discuss among themselves which one of them it might be who was going to do this thing. 24 And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest. 25 And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.' 26 "But it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant. 27 "For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves. 28 "You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; 29 and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you 30 that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve

tribes of Israel. 31 "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; 32 but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." 33 But he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!" 34 And He said, "I say to you, Peter, the rooster will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know Me." 35 And He said to them, "When I sent you out without money belt and bag and sandals, you did not lack anything, did you?" They said, "No, nothing." 36 And He said to them, "But now, whoever has a money belt is to take it along, likewise also a bag, and whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one. 37 "For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment." 38 They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." And He said to them, "It is enough." 39 And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him. 40 When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation." 41 And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and began to pray, 42 saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done." 43 Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. 44 And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. 45 When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, 46 and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation." 47 While He was still speaking, behold, a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was preceding them; and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" 49 When those who were around Him saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50 And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus answered and said, "Stop! No more of this." And He touched his ear and healed him. 52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and officers of the temple and elders who had come against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber? 53 "While I was with you daily in the temple, you did not lay hands on Me; but this hour and the power of darkness are yours." 54 Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance. 55 After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. 56 And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, "This man was with Him too." 57 But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him." 58 A little later, another saw him and said, "You are one of them too!" But Peter said, "Man, I am not!" 59 After about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, "Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are talking about." Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. 61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, "Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times." 62 And he went out and wept bitterly. 63 Now the men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him and beating Him, 64 and they blindfolded Him and were asking Him, saying, "Prophesy, who is the one who hit You?" 65 And they were saying many other things against Him, blaspheming. 66 When it was day, the Council of elders of the people assembled, both chief priests and scribes, and they led Him away to their

council chamber, saying, 67 "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe; 68 and if I ask a question, you will not answer. 69 "But from now on THE SON OF MAN WILL BE SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND of the power OF GOD." 70 And they all said, "Are You the Son of God, then?" And He said to them, "Yes, I am." 71 Then they said, "What further need do we have of testimony? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth." 1 Then the whole body of them got up and brought Him before Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." 3 So Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" And He answered him and said, "It is as you say." 4 Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no guilt in this man." 5 But they kept on insisting, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching all over Judea, starting from Galilee even as far as this place." 6 When Pilate heard it, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. 7 And when he learned that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was in Jerusalem at that time. 8 Now Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus; for he had wanted to see Him for a long time, because he had been hearing about Him and was hoping to see some sign performed by Him. 9 And he questioned Him at some length; but He answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and the scribes were standing there, accusing Him vehemently. 11 And Herod with his soldiers, after treating Him with contempt and mocking Him, dressed Him in a gorgeous robe and sent Him back to Pilate. 12 Now Herod and Pilate became friends with one another that very day; for before they had been enemies with each other. 13 Pilate summoned the chief priests and the rulers and the people, 14 and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one who incites the people to rebellion, and behold, having examined Him before you, I have found no guilt in this man regarding the charges which you make against Him. 15 "No, nor has Herod, for he sent Him back to us; and behold, nothing deserving death has been done by Him. 16 "Therefore I will punish Him and release Him." 17 Now he was obliged to release to them at the feast one prisoner. 18 But they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas!" 19 (He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder.) 20 Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, 21 but they kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!" 22 And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt demanding death; therefore I will punish Him and release Him." 23 But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices began to prevail. 24 And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand be granted. 25 And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will. 26 When they led Him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, coming in from the country, and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus. 27 And following Him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting Him. 28 But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 "For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' 30 "Then they will begin TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US,' AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.' 31 "For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?" 32 Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with Him. 33 When they came to the

place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. 34 But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves. 35 And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at Him, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, His Chosen One." 36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!" 38 Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." 39 One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" 40 But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." 42 And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" 43 And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." 44 It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." Having said this, He breathed His last. 47 Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent." 48 And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts. 49 And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things. 50 And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man 51 (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God; 52 this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain. 54 It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. 55 Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid. 56 Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

We read this account of Jesus' crucifixion ever year but sometimes the meaning of it can get lost in the routine. It is important for us to understand the implications of the death of Christ in our own lives. Jesus endured a horrible death for one important reason: to bring sinful human beings back into right relationship with the Father. Saint Paul said, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23a). Jesus paid the penalty required by the Father for our sin. Saint John said, "and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (1 John 2:2). Propitiation is a word that means, "The offering which appeases the wrath of one against whom an offence has been committed" (American Tract Society Dictionary). The appeasement of the Father's wrath through Jesus' death on the cross is God's invitation to you to be in right relationship with Him. While it is a free gift (meaning you don't have to earn it), you do have to unwrap the gift. This means that you have to receive the gift through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. John said, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John

1:12-13).

If you have not received Jesus into your life, you can do that by speaking to Him in prayer. There are not any magic words, just tell God about your belief that Jesus died for your sins. Ask Him to empower you to accomplish His work in your life through the Holy Spirit living in you. If you prayed this prayer, you are entering into a relationship with God the Father through Jesus. As with any relationship, there are certain sensitivities that we extend to the other person. When you find out what the other person values and loves then you cooperate with their plan especially when you know that they have your best interests in mind. That is how it is with God in our relationship with Him. You study the Bible to get to know who He is. You go to church to find more about His heart. You give up destructive habits that lead you away from God. Another important part of relating to God is learning to walk in step with His Spirit. Every believer has been given the gift of the Holy Spirit Who lives inside of us. To walk in step with the Spirit is to cooperate with God on a daily basis. All of these things are how we grow in our relationship with God.

Bottom Line: Questions for Reflection

1. What is one thing from these readings that helps you to trust in how Jesus is working in your life?

2. How have you personalized the story of Jesus' crucifixion?

Readings for the Week

Note: For a listing of readings for the Roman Catholic Mass, visit this web site:

http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032016.cfm Palm Sunday

Source(s):

Online Scripture verses for most Bible versions can be found at: http://www.biblegateway.com/

Scripture quotations taken from the NASB