

Week 5 March 24th**In Community with Christ**

Welcome to worship. This is our final Wednesday series. Maundy Thursday will be online, and we will have worship online and in person Good Friday April 2nd at 6:00pm. St. Mark's will have an online service and 2 in person choices 8:30am and 10:30am. Please register with the office so that we can get an idea of the numbers. Masks are distancing are requested.

Opening Prayer

Mysterious One, in Jesus you redeem us and invite all people to a place in your glory. Draw us closer to you, and in so doing, draw us closer to one another, that we may be strengthened to follow in the way of Jesus' cross and resurrection. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Gospel according to Mark 10:32-45**Jesus reminds us that we are walking the way of the cross**

³²They were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid. He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them what was to happen to him, ³³saying, "See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles; ³⁴they will mock him, and spit upon him, and flog him, and kill him; and after three days he will rise again." ³⁵James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." ³⁶And he said to them, "What is it you want me to do for you?" ³⁷And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." ³⁸But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" ³⁹They replied, "We are able." Then Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; ⁴⁰but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." ⁴¹When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴²So Jesus called them and said to them, "You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Homily (Short message)

The community of Christ

This is the final Wednesday Lenten series reflection on "Created for Community." We have given thought to being in community of creation, in community with all the saints, in community with our neighbors, in community with those on the margins and today, in community with Christ. The gospel story of Mark today is a deep dive into what it means to be in Community of Christ. Have you seen the billboard of questions: LOOKING FOR PEACE IN LIFE? WORRIED ABOUT THE FUTURE? Underneath the questions, the answer: JESUS CHRIST IS THE ANSWER. This seems to be the idea of what it means to be a Christian these days. That if you have troubles, if you need reassurance about the future, Jesus is the answer. Some people call this approach "evangelism," The idea that knowing Jesus is the answer to all your problems. The author of Mark would not agree. When Mark talks about Jesus, it's not that Jesus is the answer to our problems but, that Jesus is a strange and demanding Lord. In today's scripture, the disciples walk along with Jesus, a couple of the disciples say, "*Lord, grant us to sit at your right and your left when you come into your kingdom.*" Those who sit next to the chief are those who share power with the chief. In other words, "Lord, when we get you elected Messiah and your Kingdom is come, grant us to sit on your Cabinet!" This is understandable, they did leave everything and to follow Jesus, to walk with Jesus along his way. Unlike a lot of people, they believe that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah, the great leader who would come in, raise an army, kick out the Romans out of Judea, set up Israel again as the most powerful nation in the world. And Jesus replies to this understandable request by saying: "*You don't know what you're asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink? Are you able to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?*" We know what the disciples do not know. The road that Jesus is walking is a road that leads to torture, to death on a cross. The "cup" that Jesus is to drink is the cup of his horrible death. Jesus promises does not promise the disciples that they shall be in glory with him, rewarded and happy. He promises that if they follow him, they shall share with him his sufferings and challenges. Two disciples ask to sit next to Jesus in his glory, one on his right, one on his left. When Jesus came into his "glory," it was not on a throne. It was on a cross, with two thieves, one on his right and one on his left. This is the message that followers of Jesus today resist proclaiming to the world, perhaps because we resist hearing this message ourselves! Jesus is not a technique for getting what we want out of God; Jesus is God's way of getting what God wants out of us. What if Jesus had only said, "Even though I am the Messiah, the Son of God, Savior of the world, I am going to be nailed to a cross." You never see a church with a sign out front that reads, "Come! Be Crucified! We've Got a Cross that Fits Your Back Too!" Jesus was always upfront and could never be accused of false advertising.

A young man was going through a turbulent period in his life. In an emotional youth worship service, he gave his life to Christ. He said of his conversion, "I have found what I've always been looking for." He now runs a ministry for inner city kids in East Saint Louis. He lives in a dangerous, tough part of town. He has been the victim of crime on a number of occasions. "Well, it's sort of what you sometimes get when you get Jesus," he said with a smile. "I thought I 'found Christ' when in reality, Christ found me. I thought he wanted to give me something. Well, he has given me many good gifts, but mostly what Jesus gave me was a job to do for him rather than to do what I wanted to do for myself."

"You *will* drink out of the same cup that I drink." Jesus said. Being in the Community of Christ is strange and foreign to many people. It seems strange to sacrifice and offer help to people we do not know. In this "me first era" it seems strange to help those who are poor and struggling but that's our calling. Being in Community with the Crucified Christ sometimes means our own sacrifice and crucifixion as well. What job does Jesus call you to do? Amen.

Prayers for the People of God

God of life, we praise you for your abiding presence from generation to generation, blessing your people, strengthening us to lives of service, empowering us to witness. Hear the prayers we offer on behalf of your creation. Lord, send your church out into the world to proclaim your glory and practice your self-sacrificial love. Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lord, send us out into your creation with hearts of care and a deep desire to protect what you have so wonderfully made. Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lord, send us out into the human community to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with you, and conform the lives of all elected leaders and civic officials to that same spirit.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lord, send us out into the world bearing hope for those who are despairing, healing for those who are broken ... especially those whom we name in our hearts before you now.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Grant that as we serve you now on earth, so we may one day rejoice with all the saints in your kingdom of light and peace ... for we ask these things in the name of the One who taught us all to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

The Creator who fashions us together with all things, the Christ who leads us into a new beloved community, the Spirit who holds us in the communion of saints, one God, ✠ bless you now and always. Amen.

Dismissal Go in peace, joined together in Christ.

Thanks be to God.