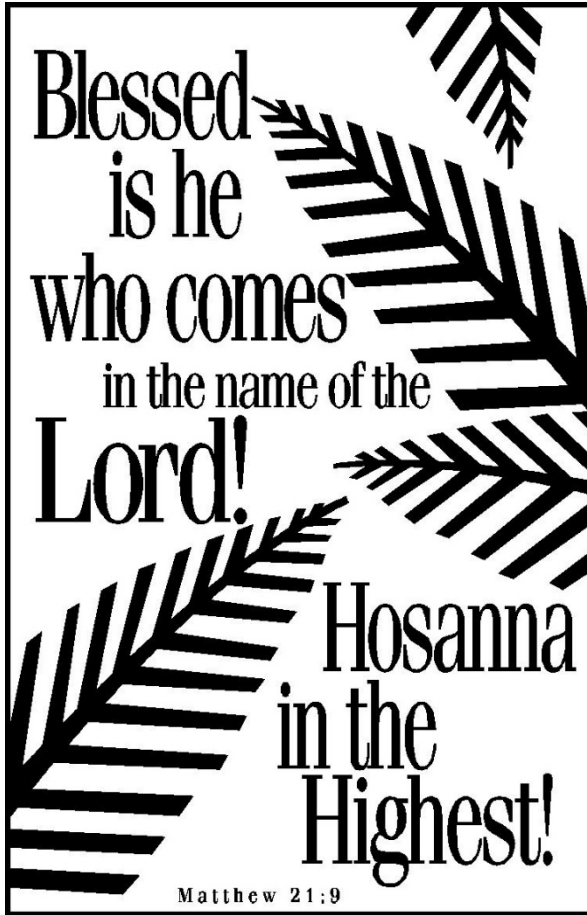


# Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



✠ Holy Communion ✠

Sunday of the Passion

March 29, 2026

**SUNDAY OF THE PASSION**



*Today, we encounter the paradox that defines our faith: Jesus Christ is glorified king and humiliated servant. We too are full of paradox: like Peter, we fervently desire to follow Christ, but find ourselves afraid, denying God. We wave palms in celebration today as Christ comes into our midst, and we follow with trepidation as his path leads to death on the cross. Amid it all we are invited into this paradoxical promise of life through Christ's broken body and outpoured love in a meal of bread and wine. We begin this week that stands at the center of the church year, anticipating the completion of God's astounding work.*

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

**Hosanna Processional**..... **Donald Moore**

*Choir*

*Please stand and face the rear of the church.*

**P** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

**C** **Hosanna to the Son of David.**

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

**P** Let us pray. Mercifully assist us, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts whereby you have given us life everlasting; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C** **Amen**

**PROCESSIONAL GOSPEL: Matthew 21:1-11**

*Jesus enters Jerusalem*

**P** The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**C** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup> When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup> If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." <sup>4</sup> This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:

<sup>5</sup> "Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look, your king is coming to you,  
humble and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

<sup>6</sup> The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; <sup>7</sup> they brought the donkey and the colt and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup> A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup> The crowds

that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,  
“Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

<sup>10</sup> When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking,  
“Who is this?” <sup>11</sup> The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from  
Nazareth in Galilee.”

**P** The Gospel of the Lord.

**C:** Praise to you, O Christ.

**BLESSING OF THE PALMS**

**P:** The Lord be with you.

**C:** And also with you.

**P:** We praise and thank you, O God, for the great acts of love by  
which you have redeemed us through your Son, Jesus Christ our  
Lord. On this day he entered the holy city of Jerusalem in  
triumph, and was acclaimed Son of David and King of kings by  
those who scattered their garments and branches of palm in his  
path. We ask that you bless these branches and those who bear  
them, and grant that we may ever hail him as our Lord and King  
and follow him with perfect confidence; through the same Jesus  
Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy  
Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen

**P** Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

**C** Hosanna in the highest.

**PROCESSION TO RECEIVE PALMS**

*Starting with the first pews, Congregation follows the choir to receive their palms.*



**PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

**All Glory, Laud, and Honor .....LBW 108**

*Refrain*

All glo - ry, laud, and hon - or to you, re - deem - er, king,

to whom the lips of chil - dren made sweet ho - san - nas ring.

- 1 You are the king of Is - rael and Da - vid's roy - al Son,
- 2 The com - pa - ny of an - gels is prais - ing you on high;
- 3 The mul - ti - tude of pil - grims with palms be - fore you went.
- 4 To you, be - fore your pas - sion, they sang their hymns of praise.
- 5 Their prais - es you ac - cept - ed; ac - cept the prayers we bring,

*Refrain*

now in the Lord's name com - ing, our King and Bless - ed One.  
 cre - a - tion and all mor - tals in cho - rus make re - ply.  
 Our praise and prayer and an - thems be - fore you we pre - sent.  
 To you, now high ex - alt - ed, our mel - o - dy we raise.  
 great au - thor of all good - ness, O good and gra - cious King.

Text: Theodulph of Orleans, c. 760-821; tr. John M. Neale, 1818-1866, alt.  
 Music: VALET WILL ICH DIR GEBEN, Melchior Teschner, 1584-1635

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P**: Let us pray.

Everlasting God, in your endless love for the human race you sent our Lord Jesus Christ to take on our nature and to suffer death on the cross. In your mercy enable us to share in his obedience to your will and in the glorious victory of his resurrection, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen

Sit

**WORD**

**OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY: Isaiah 50:4-9a**

*The servant of the Lord expresses absolute confidence in his final vindication, despite the fact that he has been struck and spit upon. This characteristic of the servant played an important role in the early church's understanding of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.*

**A:** A Reading from Isaiah:

<sup>4</sup> The Lord GOD has given me  
a trained tongue,  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning he wakens,  
wakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.  
<sup>5</sup> The Lord GOD has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious;  
I did not turn backward.  
<sup>6</sup> I gave my back to those who struck me  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.  
<sup>7</sup> The Lord GOD helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like 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 in court together.  
Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.  
<sup>9a</sup> It is the Lord GOD who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

**A:** The word of the Lord.

**C:** Thanks be to God.

**THE PASSION OF OUR LORD**

**P** The Passion of our Lord according to Saint Matthew.

*Turn to the Passion Reading contained in a separate booklet.*

*The congregation reads in unison the part of the people which is in bold type and is preceded by a stylized cross.*

**P** The Passion of our Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

Stand

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

**My Song is Love Unknown, st. 1,2, 6 and 7.....LBW 94**



1 My song is love un - known, my Sav - ior's love to me,  
2 He came from his blest throne, sal - va - tion to be - stow;  
3 Some - times they strew his way and his sweet prais - es sing;  
4 Why, what hath my Lord done? What makes this rage and spite?



love to the love - less shown, that they might love - ly be.  
but men made strange, and none the longed-for Christ would know.  
re - sound - ing all the day ho - san - nas to their King.  
He made the lame to run, he gave the blind their sight.



Oh, who am I, that for my sake my Lord should take frail  
But, oh, my friend, my friend in - deed, who at my need his  
Then "Cru - ci - fy!" is all their breath, and for his death they  
Sweet in - ju - ries! Yet they at these them - selves dis - please, and



flesh and die? My Lord should take frail flesh and die?  
life did spend; who at my need his life did spend!  
thirst and cry, and for his death they thirst and cry.  
'gainst him rise; them - selves dis - please, and 'gainst him rise.

5 They rise, and needs will have  
my dear Lord made away;  
a murderer they save,  
the prince of life they slay.  
Yet cheerful he to suff'ring goes,  
that he his foes from thence might free.

6 In life, no house, no home  
my Lord on earth might have;  
in death, no friendly tomb  
but what a stranger gave.  
What may I say? Heav'n was his home;  
but mine the tomb wherein he lay.

7 Here might I stay and sing—  
no story so divine!  
Never was love, dear King,  
never was grief like thine.  
This is my friend, in whose sweet praise  
I all my days could gladly spend!

Text: Samuel Crossman, c. 1624–1683  
Music: RHOSYMEDRE, John D. Edwards, 1806–1885

**NICENE CREED**

**C** We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven;  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,  
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living  
and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

With the Father and the Son he is worshiped  
and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*A brief silence is held after the introduction.*

**P:** Reconciled by God’s mercy and sustained by God’s presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

*After each petition:*

**P:** Here us, O God.

**C:** **Your mercy is great.**

*The prayers conclude:*

**P:** Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

**C:** **Amen**

**PEACE**

**P:** The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C:** **And also with you.**

*The pastor and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

Peace be with you. R: Peace be with you.

Sit

***MEAL***

**OFFERING**

*The Offering is received as the Lord’s table is prepared.*

**ANTHEM**

***Come to the Shadows* ..... Joseph M. Martin**

Stand

**OFFERTORY**

*As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung*

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right spir -  
 it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take  
 not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re - store to me the  
 joy of your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

**OFFERING PRAYER**

**A**: Let us pray.

**C**: **O God, maker of heaven and earth,  
your steadfast love embraces all creation.  
You send rain and sunshine to nourish the earth  
and bring forth its bounty.  
Through these gifts of bread and wine,  
draw us into the death and life of your Son,  
who calls us to bear witness to his saving work.  
We ask this in Jesus' name.  
Amen**

**GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. Each staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with a 'P' (Piano) dynamic marking. The second staff begins with a 'C' (Crescendo) dynamic marking. The fourth staff begins with a 'C' (Crescendo) dynamic marking.

**P** The Lord be with you. **C** And al - so with you.

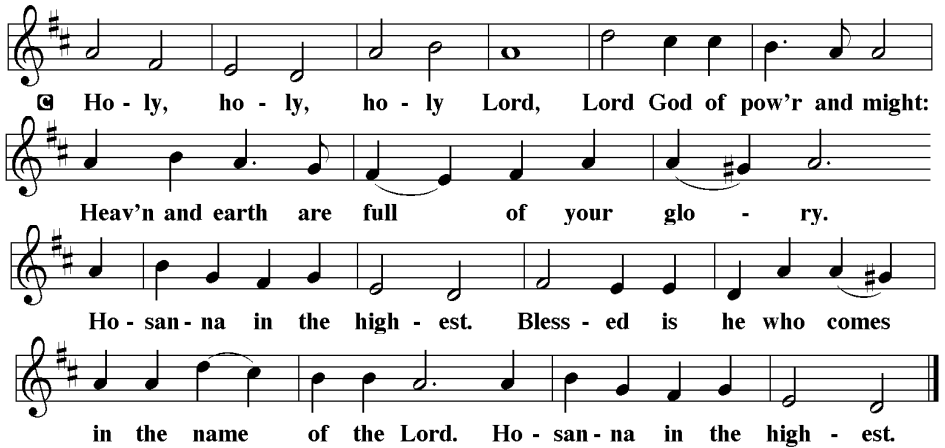
**P** Lift up your hearts. **C** We lift them to the Lord.

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C** It is right to give him thanks and praise.

**PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ, whose suffering and death gave salvation to all. You gather your people around the tree of the cross, transforming death into life. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:  
 Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.  
 Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes  
 in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

### **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

**P:** You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God.

You are most holy,  
 and great is the majesty of your glory.

You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,  
 so that everyone who believes in him may not perish  
 but have eternal life.

We give you thanks for his coming into the world  
 to fulfill for us your holy will  
 and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
 broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
 Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
 and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
 This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
 shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup,  
 we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**C:** Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

**P**: Remembering, therefore, his salutary command,  
his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension,  
and the promise of his coming again,  
we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty,  
not as we ought but as we are able;  
we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving  
and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants,  
and these your own gifts of bread and wine,  
so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ  
may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace,  
and, receiving the forgiveness of sin,  
may be formed to live as your holy people  
and be given our inheritance with all your saints.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.

**C**: Amen

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

**P**: Come to the table.  
Feast on God's goodness and mercy.

**C**: Thanks be to God.



**A** Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world;



grant us peace, grant us peace.

Sit

**COMMUNION**

All baptized believers are invited to this holy meal. Those not communing are invited for a blessing. Please follow the instructions of the ushers to gather at the altar table. As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:

**The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.**

*The communicant may say: Amen*

**COMMUNION HYMN**

**Jesus, Refuge of the Weary..... LBW 93**



1 Je - sus, ref - uge of the wea - ry, blest re - deem - er, whom we love,  
 2 Do we pass that cross un - heed - ing, breath - ing no re - pen - tant vow,  
 3 Je - sus, may our hearts be burn - ing with more fer - vent love for you;



foun - tain in life's des - ert drea - ry, Sav - ior from the world a - bove;  
 though we see you wound - ed, bleed - ing, see your thorn - en - cir - cled brow?  
 may our eyes be ev - er turn - ing to be - hold your cross a - new;



of - ten have your eyes, of - fend - ed, gazed up - on the sin - ner's fall;  
 Yet your sin - less death has brought us life e - ter - nal, peace, and rest;  
 till in glo - ry, part - ed nev - er from the bless - ed Sav - ior's side,



yet up - on the cross ex - tend - ed, you have borne the pain of all.  
 on - ly what your grace has taught us calms the sin - ner's deep dis - tress.  
 grav - en in our hearts for - ev - er, dwell the cross, the Cru - ci - fied.

*Stand*

**P**: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**C** Amen

**POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

**A**: Let us pray.

God of our salvation,  
we give you thanks for this meal that restores our souls,  
reconciles us to you, and strengthens us for the journey.  
Through the body and blood of your Son,  
may we become Christ's body in the world,  
bearing witness to your love for all creation,  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C**: Amen

***SENDING***

**BLESSING**

**P**: The God of steadfastness and encouragement  
grant you to live in harmony with one another,  
in accordance with Christ Jesus.

**C**: Amen

**P**: The God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy spirit.

**C**: Amen

**P**: The God of all grace † bless you now and forever.

**C**: Amen

**SENDING HYMN*****Beneath the Cross of Jesus..... LBW 107***

1 Be - neath the cross of Je - sus I long to take my stand;  
 2 Up - on the cross of Je - sus, my eye at times can see  
 3 I take, O cross, your shad - ow for my a - bid - ing place;



the shad - ow of a might - y rock with - in a wea - ry land,  
 the ver - y dy - ing form of one who suf - fered there for me.  
 I ask no oth - er sun - shine than the sun - shine of his face;



a home with - in a wil - der - ness, a rest up - on the way,  
 And from my con - trite heart, with tears, two won - ders I con - fess:  
 con - tent to let the world go by, to know no gain nor loss,



from the burn - ing of the noon - tide heat and bur - dens of the day.  
 the . . . won - der of his glo - rious love and my un - wor - thi - ness.  
 my . . . sin - ful self my on - ly shame, my glo - ry all, the cross.



Text: Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1830–1869

Music: ST. CHRISTOPHER, Frederick C. Maker, 1844–1927

**DISMISSAL**

**A**: Go in peace. Believe the good news.

**C**: Thanks be to God.

**POSTLUDE**



**Maundy Thursday, April 2, 7:00 p.m.**

Confession and Forgiveness, Holy Communion,  
Stripping of the Altar

**Good Friday, April 3, 7:00 p.m.**

Worship Service of Christ's Seven Last Words

**The Resurrection of Our Lord – Easter Day, April 5**

9:30 a.m. - Festival Service of Holy Communion

### SERVICE ASSISTANTS

**Ushers:** Fred Harbaugh, Jean Nolan, Diana Rooker, Susan Christ, Greg Eckenrode; **Lay Assistant:** Carola Storrs; **Comm. Asst.:** Georgette Copp; **Acolyte/Crucifer:** Doriann Morris; **Torchbearers:** Malory Klemick, Alivia Klemick; **Altar Guild:** Jody Fullmer, Jeannie Bower  
**Greeters/Presenters:** Sherri Holtzman, Doris Butt  
**Flower Delivery:** Charles Luppert; **Readers:** Carola Storrs, Janet Stroble, Georgette Copp, Pam Eveleth, Ron Yeagle, Bob Schweppenheiser, Carol Waltz

### IN BLESSED MEMORY

**The Altar Flowers** are given to the Glory of God and in honor of Nathan Rundio's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, with love Grammy and Pappy Bausinger.  
**The Palms** are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Robert E. Hassler by his wife, Jane.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Welcome to Messiah Church!** It is our joy to have you worship with us. If you are visiting, please make yourself known and leave your name & information to a congregation member. *We hope to see you again.*

**Please join us after worship in Shaheen Hall** for our Pie Social.

**Easter Flower orders are due today.** Please place them in the offering plate or bring to the church office.

**Lenten self-denial banks** are due today. Please place them in the plastic container in the Narthex or return to the church office. Thank you!

**The Lifelong Faith Formation Committee** will host an ***Easter Egg Hunt*** directly after the Easter Sunday service, *Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>* in Shaheen Hall. Bring your Easter Baskets, bags will be provided for those who forget their baskets.

**Spring is here**, so it is time to think of the "Mother's Day Dinner" (now renamed "Women's Banquet"). Pen the date of **Tuesday, May 5**, in your calendar ... roasted turkey breast ... same ticket prices as last year ... a unique program by Candy Watkins and her nephew, Brian Gresh. Tickets will be available on April 12-19-26 in the narthex.

**West Branch history is exciting!** See the displays at the THOMAS T. TABER MUSEUM on SUNDAY, APRIL 26 (12:15-2:15 p.m.) But, first, we'll have a sandwich/salad lunch—provided by members of WELCA—and then car-pool to the Museum where Wilma Reeder—an employee of the Museum—will give us an "Introduction" and then we tour on our own. Tickets will be available in the narthex on April 12 and 19.

**Trivia Night is Saturday, April 18 (6:00 p.m.)** Registration fees are \$8.00 per person or \$15.00 per couple and all monies go to the beneficiary-Messiah Pre-School's Scholarship Fund. Please bring food to share; pizza and beverages will be provided. George Jansson is our Quiz-master.

**MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**REV. A. BRUCE AMME, PRESIDING AND PREACHING**  
**JARED GIST, ORGANIST**

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702  
(570) 326-9171 | [www.messiahsouth.org](http://www.messiahsouth.org)

**His Blood Be on Us**

Today we begin Holy Week, a week filled with paradoxes, reversals, and ironic twists. The story moves inevitably toward death, yet it brings the promise of life. Jesus appears to be the victim, but he chooses this path, humbling himself, confident that God will exalt him in victory. Pilate embodies the full might of the Roman Empire but is powerless before the crowd's demands. The chief priests and elders, perhaps more than anyone else, should recognize the long-hoped-for Messiah, but their jealousy prevents this.

Perhaps the greatest irony in today's Passion reading is found in the crowd's exclamation, "His blood be on us and on our children!" (Matthew 27:25). These words have been misused to slander the Jewish people, claiming they bear the guilt of Christ's blood. Superficially, that is what the crowd means: Pilate refuses responsibility, so the people take it upon themselves. Theologically, though, the crowd speaks a universal truth. Far from justifying anti-Jewish scapegoating, these words apply to all humanity. Somehow we are all implicated in the death of Jesus. Our rebellion, our sin, places him on the cross.

Paradoxically, however, the crowd's words also reveal a deeper truth. The blood of Christ does not mark with condemnation; it promises forgiveness. It does not stain with guilt; it washes sin away. By accepting suffering and death at the hands of sinners, Jesus wins the victory of love. His blood be on us, indeed! Just as we all share guilt in the crucifixion of Jesus, so too are we all granted mercy by his self-giving death. United in baptism to his death and resurrection, receiving his body and blood in communion, we receive grace, freedom, and life.

In the days to come, do not look at these contradictions as puzzles to be solved. They are mysteries beyond full understanding. But as you contemplate the events of Holy Week, you will discover new depths of God's love for you. May his blood be upon us all, with mercy and salvation.

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