Vision (April 6 – April 19)

Sunday, April 6

Ignatius of Loyola was a man of great vision. Ignatius’ graced vision to see a world “charged with the grandeur of God” — to envision and imagine such a world — began during his recuperation at his home in Loyola following the Battle of Pamplona in 1521. It was further illuminated through an experience at the river Cardoner a few years later, and confirmed through his profound vision at La Storta in 1539, where God "placed him with His Son" carrying His cross.

Today, as companions of Christ and stewards of that vision, our mission is to continue the work begun by Ignatius and sustained by the love and grace of God in the lives and ministries of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Like many who labor in the vineyard of the Lord, we live at the juncture of interesting times — times when God’s love is being made manifest in new ways, and where both new opportunities and new challenges abound. We are called to look to the horizon, the frontier, and imagine a future that is not yet here.

As we move from Lent into Holy Week, we pray now for the grace of vision. The vision to see, the vision to hear, the vision to read the signs of the times — in order to discern more deeply how we are called, as companions in the Lord, to follow Christ and to serve Him in our work, our ministries and our lives.

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to be united with the Lord Jesus in his vision as I journey with Him to Jerusalem and the cross.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040614.cfm
Jn 11:1-45

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill. So the sisters sent word to him saying, “Master, the one you love is ill.”

When Jesus heard this he said, “This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.”

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was. Then after this he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.” The disciples said to him, “Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?”

Jesus answered, “Are there not twelve hours in a day? If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.”

He said this, and then told them, “Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him.”

So the disciples said to him, “Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved.” But Jesus was talking about his death, while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep. So then Jesus said to them clearly, “Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him.”

So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go to die with him.”

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary.
to comfort them about their brother.  

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming,  
she went to meet him;  
but Mary sat at home.  
Martha said to Jesus,  
“Lord, if you had been here,  
my brother would not have died.  
But even now I know that whatever you ask of God,  
God will give you.”

Jesus said to her,  
“Your brother will rise.”

Martha said to him,  
“I know he will rise,  
in the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus told her,  
“I am the resurrection and the life;  
whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live,  
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.  
Do you believe this?”

She said to him, “Yes, Lord.  
I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God,  
the one who is coming into the world.”

When she had said this,  
she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying,  
“The teacher is here and is asking for you.”

As soon as she heard this,  
she rose quickly and went to him.

For Jesus had not yet come into the village,  
but was still where Martha had met him.

So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her  
saw Mary get up quickly and go out,  
they followed her,  
assuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there.  
When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him,  
she fell at his feet and said to him,  
“Lord, if you had been here,  
my brother would not have died.”

When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping,  
he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said,  
“What have you laid him?”

They said to him, “Sir, come and see.”

And Jesus wept.

So the Jews said, “See how he loved him.”

But some of them said,  
“Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man  
have done something so that this man would not have died?”

So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb.  
It was a cave, and a stone lay across it.
Jesus said, “Take away the stone.”
Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him,
“Lord, by now there will be a stench;
his has been dead for four days.”
Jesus said to her,
“Did I not tell you that if you believe
you will see the glory of God?”
So they took away the stone.
And Jesus raised his eyes and said,
“Father, I thank you for hearing me.
I know that you always hear me;
but because of the crowd here I have said this,
that they may believe that you sent me.”
And when he had said this,
He cried out in a loud voice,
“Lazarus, come out!”
The dead man came out,
tied hand and foot with burial bands,
and his face was wrapped in a cloth.
So Jesus said to them,
“Untie him and let him go.”

Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary
and seen what he had done began to believe in him.

Reflection Questions

1. Be present at the encounter between Martha and Jesus as He arrived at the tomb of Lazarus in Bethany. He says, “I am the resurrection and the life: whoever believes in me ... will never die.” How must I profess my faith in the Lord Jesus as Martha did, “Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world”?  

2. Jesus is moved with compassion and wept for Lazarus, whom he deeply loved. See how Jesus desired to conquer death and raise Lazarus to new life, a foretaste of the Paschal mystery to be unfolded. What do I need to surrender to and what must die within me in order to have new life in Christ?

Reflection

“This is Seedtime” from “With Bound Hands” by Alfred Delp, SJ

Alfred Delp was a German Jesuit, who was executed for his resistance to the Nazi regime. Fr. Delp was offered his freedom if he would renounce the Jesuits. He refused and was hanged February 2, 1945.

One thing is becoming gradually clear — I must surrender myself completely. This is seedtime, not harvest. God sows the seed and some time or other he will do the reaping. The one thing I must do
is to make sure the seed falls on fertile ground. And I must arm myself against the pain and depression that sometimes almost defeat me. If this is the way God has chosen — and everything indicates that it is — then I must willingly and without rancor make it my way. May others at some future time find it possible to have a better and happier life because we died in this hour of trial.

From “A Fire that Kindles Other Fires” - Decree 2 of the Society of Jesus’ General Congregation 35:

While at Manresa, Ignatius had an experience at the river Cardoner that opened his eyes so that “all things seemed new to him” because he began to see them with new eyes. Reality became transparent to him, enabling him to see God working in the depths of everything and inviting him to “help souls.” This new view of reality led Ignatius to seek and find God in all things.

The understanding that Ignatius received taught him a contemplative way of standing in the world, of contemplating God at work in the depths of things, of tasting “the infinite sweetness and charm of the divinity, of the soul, of its virtues and of everything there.” Starting from the contemplation of the incarnation it is clear that Ignatius does not sweeten or falsify painful realities. Rather he begins with them, exactly as they are — poverty, forced displacement, violence between people, abandonment, structural injustice, sin — but then he points to how God’s Son was born into these realities; and it is here that sweetness is found.

Tasting and seeing God in reality is a process. Ignatius had to learn this himself through many painful experiences. At La Storta he received the grace to be placed with the Son bearing the Cross; and so he and his companions were drawn into the Son’s pattern of life, with its joys and with its sufferings. Similarly today the Society, in carrying out its mission, experiences the companionship of the Lord and the challenge of the Cross. Commitment to “the service of faith and the promotion of justice,” to dialogue with cultures and religions, takes Jesuits to limit-situations where they encounter energy and new life, but also anguish and death — where “the Divinity is hidden.”

The experience of a hidden God cannot always be avoided, but even in the depths of darkness when God seems concealed, the transforming light of God is able to shine. God labors intensely in this hiddenness. Rising from the tombs of personal life and history, the Lord appears when we least expect, with his personal consolation as a friend and as the center of a fraternal and servant community.

From this experience of God laboring in the heart of life, our identity as “servants of Christ’s mission” rises up ever anew.

Other Resources
View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040614.cfm
Monday, April 7

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to be united with the Lord Jesus in his vision as I journey with Him to Jerusalem and the cross.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040714.cfm

Jn 8:1-11
Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.
But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them.
Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle.
They said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?”
They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him.
Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger.
But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”
Again he bent down and wrote on the ground.
And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders.
So he was left alone with the woman before him.
Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they?
Has no one condemned you?”
She replied, “No one, sir.”
Then Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more.”

“Sorrowful Woman, Figures in Flames and the Light of Truth” by Bob Gilroy, SJ
Reflection Questions

1. In the encounter with the woman caught in adultery, the crowds want to condemn and stone her to death, but Jesus responds, “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” How have I judged and “stoned” others, while being blinded to my own sinfulness? What areas in my life are hardened and weigh heavily on my heart?

2. Jesus reassures the woman that he does not condemn her and tells her to go and sin no more. What aspects of my life does Jesus need to enter into to forgive or heal?

3. Jesus shows deep mercy and compassion for the woman caught in adultery. Where am I called to restore the dignity of the human person, as Christ did, in my work and life?

Reflection

In the Hands of God
by Pedro Arrupe, SJ

Pedro Arrupe composed this prayer after he suffered a debilitating stroke while serving as Superior General of the Society of Jesus.

More than ever I find myself in the hands of God.
This is what I have wanted all my life from my youth.

But now there is a difference;
the initiative is entirely with God.

It is indeed a profound spiritual experience
to know and feel myself so totally in God’s hands.

From “A Fire that Kindles Other Fires” - Decree 2 of the Society of Jesus’ General Congregation 35:

To follow Christ bearing his Cross means announcing his Gospel of hope to the many poor who inhabit our world today. The world’s many ‘poverties’ represent thirsts that, ultimately, only he who is living water can assuage. Working for his Reign will often mean meeting material needs, but it will always mean much more, because human beings thirst at many levels; and Christ’s mission is directed to human beings. Faith and justice; it is never one without the other. Human beings need food, shelter, love, relationship, truth, meaning, promise, hope. Human beings need a future in which they can take hold of their full dignity; indeed they need an absolute future, a ‘great hope’ that exceeds every particular hope.

All of these things are already present in the heart of Christ’s mission, which, as was particularly evident in his healing ministry, was always more than physical. In healing the leper, Jesus restored him to the community, gave him a sense of belonging. Our mission finds its inspiration in this ministry of Jesus. Following Jesus, we feel ourselves called not only to bring direct help to people in distress, but also to restore entire human persons in their integrity, reintegrating them in community and reconciling them with God. This frequently calls for an engagement that is long-term, be it in the education of youth, in the spiritual accompaniment of the Exercises, in intellectual research, or in the
service of refugees. But it is here, aided by grace and drawing on whatever professional capacities we may have that we try to offer ourselves to God fully, for his service.

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040714.cfm
Tuesday, April 8

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to be united with the Lord Jesus in his vision as I journey with Him to Jerusalem and the cross.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/reading/040814.cfm

Nm 21:4-9
From Mount Hor the children of Israel set out on the Red Sea road, to bypass the land of Edom.
But with their patience worn out by the journey, the people complained against God and Moses, “Why have you brought us up from Egypt to die in this desert, where there is no food or water? We are disgusted with this wretched food!”

In punishment the LORD sent among the people saraph serpents, which bit the people so that many of them died.
Then the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned in complaining against the LORD and you. Pray the LORD to take the serpents away from us.”
So Moses prayed for the people, and the LORD said to Moses, “Make a saraph and mount it on a pole, and whoever looks at it after being bitten will live.”
Moses accordingly made a bronze serpent and mounted it on a pole, and whenever anyone who had been bitten by a serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

Jn 8:21-30
Jesus said to the Pharisees: “I am going away and you will look for me, but you will die in your sin.
Where I am going you cannot come.”
So the Jews said, “He is not going to kill himself, is he, because he said, ‘Where I am going you cannot come’?”
He said to them, “You belong to what is below,
I belong to what is above.
You belong to this world,
but I do not belong to this world.
That is why I told you that you will die in your sins.
For if you do not believe that I AM,
you will die in your sins.”
So they said to him, “Who are you?”
Jesus said to them, “What I told you from the beginning.
I have much to say about you in condemnation.
But the one who sent me is true,
and what I heard from him I tell the world.”
They did not realize that he was speaking to them of the Father.
So Jesus said to them,
“When you lift up the Son of Man,
then you will realize that I AM,
and that I do nothing on my own,
but I say only what the Father taught me.
The one who sent me is with me.
He has not left me alone,
because I always do what is pleasing to him.”
Because he spoke this way, many came to believe in him.

Reflection Questions

1. When the Israelites began to turn away from God in the desert, Moses is instructed to lift up the bronze serpent on a pole so that people are saved when they look and believe. In the same manner, Jesus is lifted high on the cross so that those who look and believe may be saved. How have I wandered and been lost in the desert in my life journey?
2. In their encounter with Jesus, the Pharisees are portrayed as antagonists who are hardened of hearts. They look but do not see, seek but do not find. At the foot of the cross, what do I see in the depth of my heart through the lens of faith and love? What are my deepest desires and visions, and are they in congruence with Christ’s desire and hope for me?

Reflection

The Dark Nights
by Max Oliva, SJ (from “Free to Pray, Free to Love”)

My heart is wounded.
I languish, waiting for you, God,
to heal me.
I wait on your love
that will return my spirit to me,
a new spirit,
and a new depth of inner peace.
With John of the Cross, I pray,
“Quench thou my griefs, 
and let mine eyes behold thee.”

Find me.
I am wounded by your love.
I need your love
  to breathe
  to walk and eat
  to laugh and cry
  to do simple actions
  to feel an emotion or
  to think a thought.

Show me that which my wounded heart desires.
Energize me with your loving power.
Amen.

“*Ite Inflammat omnia*” from “A Fire that Kindles Other Fires” - Decree 2 of the Society of Jesus’ General Congregation 35:

Legend has it that Saint Ignatius, when he sent Saint Francis Xavier to the East, told him: “go, set the world alight.” With the birth of the Society of Jesus, a new fire was lit in a changing world. A novel form of religious life came about, not through human enterprise but as a divine initiative. The fire that was set alight then continues to burn in our Jesuit life today, as was said about Saint Alberto Hurtado, “a fire that kindles other fires.” With it, we are called to set all things alight with the love of God.

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040814.cfm
Wednesday, April 9

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to be united with the Lord Jesus in his vision as I journey with Him to Jerusalem and the cross.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040914.cfm

Dn 3:14-20, 91-92, 95

King Nebuchadnezzar said: “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you will not serve my god, or worship the golden statue that I set up? Be ready now to fall down and worship the statue I had made, whenever you hear the sound of the trumpet, flute, lyre, harp, psaltery, bagpipe, and all the other musical instruments; otherwise, you shall be instantly cast into the white-hot furnace; and who is the God who can deliver you out of my hands?”

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered King Nebuchadnezzar, “There is no need for us to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If our God, whom we serve, can save us from the white-hot furnace and from your hands, O king, may he save us! But even if he will not, know, O king, that we will not serve your god or worship the golden statue that you set up.”

King Nebuchadnezzar’s face became livid with utter rage against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace to be heated seven times more than usual and had some of the strongest men in his army bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and cast them into the white-hot furnace.

“Ignatius of Loyola” by Fr. Michael Tang
Nebuchadnezzar rose in haste and asked his nobles, “Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?” “Assuredly, O king,” they answered. “But,” he replied, “I see four men unfettered and unhurt, walking in the fire, and the fourth looks like a son of God.” Nebuchadnezzar exclaimed, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent his angel to deliver the servants who trusted in him; they disobeyed the royal command and yielded their bodies rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.”

Jn 8:31-42
Jesus said to those Jews who believed in him, “If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, ‘You will become free’?” Jesus answered them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. A slave does not remain in a household forever, but a son always remains. So if the Son frees you, then you will truly be free. I know that you are descendants of Abraham. But you are trying to kill me, because my word has no room among you. I tell you what I have seen in the Father’s presence; then do what you have heard from the Father.”

They answered and said to him, “Our father is Abraham.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works of Abraham. But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God; Abraham did not do this. You are doing the works of your father!” So they said to him, “We were not born of fornication. We have one Father, God.” Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me.”

Reflection Questions

1. In the reading from Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego trusted in God and are faithful to the very end in the face of persecution and death. In their suffering, God comes to console and free them from their enemies. How does my suffering allow me to enter
into the mystery of Christ’s suffering for me? Encountering Christ at the cross, I find comfort and hope in the profound realization that God has not abandoned us in our suffering and brokenness.

2. Those who receive the Word of God and live by them will be saved. Jesus reassures his disciples, “If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” The truth of Christ reveals God’s salvific plan and love for the world. Let us remain in Christ this day and be obedient to his teaching, “Remain in me as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.” (Jn 15:4)

3. Where have I responded to God’s call in Christ to be prophetic? Through my own trials, what should I take up as the cause of the crucified world as my own? What should I do for Christ?

Reflection

From Death to Life
by St. Peter Faber, SJ

Jesus Christ, may your death be my life
and in your dying may I learn how to live.
May your struggles be my rest,
Your human weakness my courage,
Your embarrassment my honor,
Your passion my delight,
Your sadness my joy,
In your humiliation my I be exalted.
In a word, may I find all my blessings in your trials.
Amen.

Selection from Santa Clara University Commencement Address, June 1982, by Ignacio Ellacuría, SJ:

Liberation theology has emphasized what the preferential option for the poor means in authentic Christianity. Such an option constitutes an essential part of Christian life — but it is also an historic obligation. For the poor embody Christ in a special way; they mirror for us his message of revelation, salvation and conversion. And they are also a universal social reality. Reason and faith merge, therefore, in confronting the reality of the poor. Reason must open its eyes to their suffering; faith — which is sometimes scandalous to those without it — sees in the weak of this world the triumph of God, for we see in the poor what salvation must mean and the conversion to which we are called...

...But we also have been encouraged by the words of Archbishop Romero — himself so soon to be murdered. It was he who said, while we were burying an assassinated priest, that something would be terribly wrong in our Church if no priest lay next to so many of his assassinated brothers and sisters. If the University had not suffered, we would not have performed our duty. In a world where injustice reigns, a university that fights for justice must necessarily be persecuted.

I would like to think — and this is the meaning I give to this honorary degree — that you understand our efforts, our mission. Something of the tragic reality that is El Salvador.
And how do you help us? That is not for me to say. Only open your human heart, your Christian heart, and ask yourselves the three questions Ignatius of Loyola put to himself as he stood in front of the crucified world: What have I done for Christ in this world? What am I doing now? And above all, what should I do?

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/040914.cfm

http://jesuits.org/greaterlove
Thursday, April 10

Today's Grace

I pray for the grace to be united with the Lord Jesus in his vision as I journey with Him to Jerusalem and the cross.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: [http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041014.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041014.cfm)

**Gn 17:3-9**
When Abram prostrated himself, God spoke to him:
“My covenant with you is this:
you are to become the father of a host of nations.
No longer shall you be called Abram;
your name shall be Abraham,
for I am making you the father of a host of nations.
I will render you exceedingly fertile;
I will make nations of you;
kings shall stem from you.
I will maintain my covenant with you
and your descendants after you
throughout the ages as an everlasting pact,
to be your God and the God of your descendants after you.
I will give to you
and to your descendants after you
the land in which you are now staying,
the whole land of Canaan, as a permanent possession;
and I will be their God.”

God also said to Abraham:
“On your part, you and your descendants after you
must keep my covenant throughout the ages.”

**Jn 8:51-59**
Jesus said to the Jews:
“Amen, amen, I say to you,
whoever keeps my word will never see death.”
So the Jews said to him,
“Now we are sure that you are possessed.

http://jesuits.org/greaterlove
Abraham died, as did the prophets, yet you say, ‘Whoever keeps my word will never taste death.’ Are you greater than our father Abraham, who died? Or the prophets, who died? Who do you make yourself out to be?”

Jesus answered, “If I glorify myself, my glory is worth nothing; but it is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God.’ You do not know him, but I know him. And if I should say that I do not know him, I would be like you a liar. But I do know him and I keep his word. Abraham your father rejoiced to see my day; he saw it and was glad.”

So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old and you have seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I AM.”

So they picked up stones to throw at him; but Jesus hid and went out of the temple area.

Reflection Questions

1. God’s covenantal promise to Abraham as “the father to a host of nations” continues to unfold in our lives today when we are obedient and faithful. God desires for us to flourish and be fertile in grace when we are faithful to the Lord. I bring to the Lord my life and recognize His promise that He is with me always. As Jesuits or lay partners, where have I found human flourishing in my vocation and ministries?

2. Jesus said, “I solemnly assure you, if a man is true to my word he will never see death.” How faithful and true have I been in following Christ? How have I come to know the faithfulness and constancy of God in my life, in all my joys and struggles?

3. At La Storta, St. Ignatius experienced a vision of being placed with Christ that has oriented the Society of Jesus throughout its existence. How have I, as a member of the Society or a partner of the Society, worked to keep that covenant?

Reflection

Fall in Love
Attributed to Pedro Arrupe, SJ

Nothing is more practical than finding God, than falling in Love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination,
will affect everything.
It will decide
what will get you out of bed in the morning,
what you do with your evenings,
how you spend your weekends,
what you read, whom you know,
what breaks your heart,
and what amazes you with joy and gratitude.
Fall in Love, stay in love,
and it will decide everything.

“The Vision of La Storta” from “A Fire that Kindles Other Fires” - Decree 2 of the Society of Jesus’ General Congregation 35:

Saint Ignatius had the most significant experience for the founding of the Society in the little chapel of La Storta on his way to Rome. In this mystical grace he saw clearly “that the Father placed him with Christ, his Son,” as the same Ignatius had asked insistently of Mary. At La Storta, the Father placed him with His Son carrying His Cross, and Jesus accepted him saying: “I wish you to serve us.” Ignatius felt himself confirmed personally, and felt the group confirmed, in the plan moving their hearts to place themselves at the service of the Vicar of Christ on earth. “Ignatius told me that God the Father imprinted these words on his heart: ‘Ego ero vobis Romae propitius.’” But this affirmation did not make Ignatius dream of easy paths, since he told his companions that they would encounter “many contradictions” in Rome, and perhaps even be crucified. It is from Ignatius’s encounter with the Lord at La Storta that the future life of service and mission of the companions emerges in its characteristic contours: following Christ bearing his Cross; fidelity to the Church and to the Vicar of Christ on earth; and living as friends of — and thus in — the Lord in one single apostolic body.

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041014.cfm
Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to be united with the Lord Jesus in his vision as I journey with Him to Jerusalem and the cross.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041114.cfm

Jn 10:31-42

The Jews picked up rocks to stone Jesus. Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of these are you trying to stone me?” The Jews answered him, “We are not stoning you for a good work but for blasphemy. You, a man, are making yourself God.” Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, ‘You are gods’”? If it calls them gods to whom the word of God came, and Scripture cannot be set aside, can you say that the one whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world blasphemes because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not perform my Father’s works, do not believe me; but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may realize and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” Then they tried again to arrest him; but he escaped from their power.

He went back across the Jordan to the place where John first baptized, and there he remained. Many came to him and said, “John performed no sign,
but everything John said about this man was true.”
And many there began to believe in him.

**Reflection Questions**

1. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn 14:6). Jesus represents the truth, but there are those who reject his words because he threatened their conception of God and their way of life. Yet, there are those who were opened to receive and came to believe. How have I received the truth of Christ so that it may bear fruits in my life and ministries?
2. When we open ourselves and accept in faith, grace permeates our being and our identity is transformed in Christ and our perspective is profoundly changed. When has this process of *metanoia*, which is wholly dependent in God’s grace, deepened within me and shaped my vision? What areas of my life need transformation in faith and surrendering to God’s grace?
3. To labor for the Reign of God is to often face fear, rejection and misunderstanding, at times, even violence and hatred. Where have I felt this in my life and ministries? Where have I had an experience of being called to be Eucharist for the world?

**Reflection**

**Prayer for Compassion**
by Pedro Arrupe, SJ

Teach me how to be compassionate to the suffering, to the poor, the blind, the lame, and the lepers; show me how you revealed your deepest emotions, as when you shed tears, or when you felt sorrow and anguish to the point of sweating blood and needed an angel to console you. Above all, I want to learn how you supported the extreme pain of the cross, including the abandonment of your Father.

**From “Prison Writings” by Alfred Delp, SJ**

*Alfred Delp was a German Jesuit, who was executed for his resistance to the Nazi regime. Fr. Delp was offered his freedom if he would renounce the Jesuits. He refused and was hanged February 2, 1945.*

The man crying in the wilderness. We live in an age that has every right to consider itself no wilderness. But woe to any age in which the voice crying in the wilderness can no longer be heard because the noises of everyday life drown it — or restrictions forbid it — or it is lost in the hurry and turmoil of “progress” — or simply stifled by authority, misled by fear and cowardice. Then the destructive weeds will spread so suddenly and rapidly that the word “wilderness” will recur to [people]’s minds willy-nilly. I believe we are no strangers to this discovery.

Yet for all this, where are the voices that should ring out in protest and accusation? There should
never be any lack of prophets like John the Baptist in the kaleidoscope of life at any period; brave [people] inspired by the dynamic compulsion of the mission to which they are dedicated, true witnesses following the lead of their hearts and endowed with clear vision and unerring judgment. Such [people] do not cry out for the sake of making a noise or the pleasure of hearing their own voices, or because they envy other[s] the good things which have not come their way in account of their singular attitude towards life. They are above envy and have a solace known only to those who have crossed both the inner and outer borders of existence. Such [people] proclaim the message of healing and salvation. They warn [people] of [their] chance, because they already feel the ground heaving beneath their feet, feel the beams cracking and the great mountains shuddering inwardly and the stars swinging in space. They cry out to [people], urging [them] to save [themselves] by a change of heart before the coming of the catastrophes threatening to overwhelm [them].

Oh God, surely enough people nowadays know what it means to clear away bomb dust and rubble of destruction, making the rough places smooth again. They will know it for many years to come with this labor weighing on them. Oh, may the arresting voices of the wilderness ring out warning [hu]mankind in good time that ruin and devastation actually spread from within. May the Advent figure of St. John the Baptist, the incorruptible herald and teacher in God’s name, be no longer a stranger in our own wilderness. Much depends on such symbolic figures in our lives. For how shall we hear if there are none to cry out, none whose voice can rise above the tumult of violence and destruction, the false clamor that deafens us to reality?

**Other Resources**

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: [http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041114.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041114.cfm)
Saturday, April 12

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to be united with the Lord Jesus in his vision as I journey with Him to Jerusalem and the cross.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041214.cfm

Ez 37:21-28

Thus says the Lord GOD: I will take the children of Israel from among the nations to which they have come, and gather them from all sides to bring them back to their land. I will make them one nation upon the land, in the mountains of Israel, and there shall be one prince for them all. Never again shall they be two nations, and never again shall they be divided into two kingdoms.

No longer shall they defile themselves with their idols, their abominations, and all their transgressions. I will deliver them from all their sins of apostasy, and cleanse them so that they may be my people and I may be their God. My servant David shall be prince over them, and there shall be one shepherd for them all; they shall live by my statutes and carefully observe my decrees. They shall live on the land that I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where their fathers lived; they shall live on it forever, they, and their children, and their children’s children, with my servant David their prince forever. I will make with them a covenant of peace; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them, and I will multiply them, and put my sanctuary among them forever. My dwelling shall be with them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Thus the nations shall know that it is I, the LORD,
who make Israel holy,
when my sanctuary shall be set up among them forever.

Reflection Questions

1. The prophet Ezekiel speaks of God’s promise to gather all the Israelites and bring them back to their land. Where sins divide and fears enslave, we yearn to be united in the Lord and experience his love and grace. Where have I made a good return of God’s love and promise, and where can I make a more generous return?

2. We will soon enter into the Passion of Christ to contemplate on the meaning of the cross, which unites us in the self-emptying love of God. How am I invited to live more rooted in Christ?

3. As companions of Christ, we are also called to follow the example of the Good Shepherd, to live and support our sisters and brothers in Christ. Where am I challenged to serve the needs of others in my ministries and communities?

Reflection

Selections from Pope Francis’ 2013 Chrism Mass Homily:

We need to “go out,” then, in order to experience our own anointing, its power and its redemptive efficacy: to the “outskirts” where there is suffering, bloodshed, blindness that longs for sight, and prisoners in thrall to many evil masters. It is not in soul-searching or constant introspection that we encounter the Lord: self-help courses can be useful in life, but to live our priestly life going from one course to another, from one method to another, leads us to become pelagians and to minimize the power of grace, which comes alive and flourishes to the extent that we, in faith, go out and give ourselves and the Gospel to others, giving what little ointment we have to those who have nothing, nothing at all.

The priest who seldom goes out of himself, who anoints little — I won’t say “not at all” because, thank God, the people take the oil from us anyway — misses out on the best of our people, on what can stir the depths of his priestly heart. Those who do not go out of themselves, instead of being mediators, gradually become intermediaries, managers. We know the difference: the intermediary, the manager, “has already received his reward,” and since he doesn’t put his own skin and his own heart on the line, he never hears a warm, heartfelt word of thanks. This is precisely the reason for the dissatisfaction of some, who end up sad — sad priests — in some sense becoming collectors of antiques or novelties, instead of being shepherds living with “the odour of the sheep.” This I ask you: be shepherds, with the “odour of the sheep,” make it real, as shepherds among your flock, fishers of men. True enough, the so-called crisis of priestly identity threatens us all and adds to the broader cultural crisis; but if we can resist its onslaught, we will be able to put out in the name of the Lord and cast our nets. It is not a bad thing that reality itself forces us to “put out into the deep,” where what we are by grace is clearly seen as pure grace, out into the deep of the contemporary world, where the only thing that counts is “unction” — not function — and the nets which overflow with fish are those cast solely in the name of the One in whom we have put our trust: Jesus.
From “A Fire that Kindles Other Fires” - Decree 2 of the Society of Jesus’ General Congregation 35:

Through prayerful discernment, open discussion, and spiritual conversations, we have again and again been privileged to know ourselves as one in the Lord: one united, apostolic body seeking what is best for the service of God in the Church and for the world. This graced experience reminds us of the experience recounted in the Deliberation of the First Fathers. Our earliest companions, even though they considered themselves weak and fragile and originating from many different places, found the will of God together amid great diversity of opinion. What enabled them to find God’s will was their “decided care and alertness to initiate a completely open way” and to offer themselves fully to it for the greater glory of God. Thus they began a narrative; they lit a fire, which was handed on in subsequent generations whenever people encountered the Society, enabling the personal histories of generations to become embedded in the Society’s history as a whole. This collective history formed the basis of their unity; and at its heart was Jesus Christ.

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041214.cfm
Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion, April 13

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to feel sorrow and compassion, so that I may be united with the Lord Jesus in his Passion.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041314.cfm

Phil 2:6-11

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Mt 26:14-27:66

The Passion of Our Lord according to Matthew:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041314.cfm

Reflection Questions

1. Be present at the Passion of Jesus and notice the events and actors. Who do you identify with? The vengeful leaders, the jeering crowds, the cunning Pilate? The fearful disciples, the
denying Peter, the hopeless Judas? The privileged Simon of Cyrene, the faithful women
who accompanied Jesus to the foot of the cross, the crucified criminals? What particular
point or event resonates with you — stay there and contemplate the mystery of Christ’s
Passion that culminates in the cross.

2. The reading from Philippians, often called the “Christological Hymn,” is profoundly poignant
with the self-emptying “kenosis” of Christ on the cross — “he emptied himself, taking the
form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled
himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” How am I moved
and humbled at the sight of the Lord on the cross, emptying himself out of love for me?

Reflection

The Cross Opens the Way to Life from “Journeying with the Lord: Reflections for Everyday” by
Cardinal Carlos Maria Martini, SJ:

The cross is ever before us. It wants to speak to us, if only we contemplate it with love, drawn by the
power of the Spirit who is the gift of Christ crucified. If we look upon it with awe and affection, the
cross becomes an enticing, warm and all-consuming fire: it gives us a challenge.

It asks us many things. The cross asks us, our communities, our societies and our cultures to confirm
that there do exist paths from the cross to resolve human problems.

Our experience reveals that pain, suffering and death fill our history.

Jesus did not invent the cross. He, like every man, found it on his journey. The newness of his
message was to plant a seed of love into our bearing of the cross. The element of love turned the
Way of the Cross into a way that leads to life. The cross itself became a message of love; a means of
our transformation. Our cross is also the cross of Jesus!

This cross first embraces each of us, and entrusts us with a duty in our personal life, in our families,
among our friends and acquaintances — in sum, with whoever else’s cross we encounter. I think of
the many broken families, the many illnesses which have not been accepted, of hardened hearts
which have become embittered, resentful and brooding. How many crosses have been borne up and
down in the elevators of our buildings. How many cross-bearers walk up and down our streets,
populate our cities!

From his cross, Jesus invites each of us today to put all these crosses, and not just our own, into
relationship with our own. Jesus invites us to do as he did — plant the seed of love and hope in the
soil of each of the crosses we encounter.

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041314.cfm
Monday, April 14

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to feel sorrow and compassion, so that I may be united with the Lord Jesus in his Passion.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041414.cfm

Is 42:1-7
Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one with whom I am pleased, Upon whom I have put my Spirit; he shall bring forth justice to the nations, Not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the street. A bruised reed he shall not break, and a smoldering wick he shall not quench, Until he establishes justice on the earth; the coastlands will wait for his teaching.

Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spreads out the earth with its crops, Who gives breath to its people and spirit to those who walk on it: I, the LORD, have called you for the victory of justice, I have grasped you by the hand; I formed you, and set you as a covenant of the people, a light for the nations, To open the eyes of the blind, to bring out prisoners from confinement, and from the dungeon, those who live in darkness.

Jn 12:1-11
Six days before Passover Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. They gave a dinner for him there, and Martha served,
while Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him. Mary took a liter of costly perfumed oil made from genuine aromatic nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair; the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

Then Judas the Iscariot, one of his disciples, and the one who would betray him, said, “Why was this oil not sold for three hundred days’ wages and given to the poor?” He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief and held the money bag and used to steal the contributions. So Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Let her keep this for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”

The large crowd of the Jews found out that he was there and came, not only because of him, but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. And the chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus too, because many of the Jews were turning away and believing in Jesus because of him.

Reflection Questions

1. Isaiah speaks of the suffering servant who endures in silent suffering and humiliation, alluding to Christ’s suffering for us. How am I attentive to and in solidarity with those who are suffering because of oppression, injustice, persecution, poverty? How am I moved by their helplessness and called to be an instrument of Christ’s love and peace in the world?

2. We are once again in Bethany, the place where Lazarus was raised from the dead. Watch as Mary lovingly anointed Jesus with the perfume in preparation for what is to come. How am I attentive to the Lord this day as I journey with him to Jerusalem?

Reflection

“Following Christ” from “A Fire that Kindles Other Fires” - Decree 2 of the Society of Jesus’ General Congregation 35:

To follow Christ bearing his Cross means opening ourselves with him to every thirst that afflicts humanity today. Christ is nourishment itself, the answer to every hunger and thirst. He is the bread of life, who, in feeding the hungry, draws them together and unites them. He is the water of life, the living water of which he spoke to the Samaritan woman in a dialogue that surprised his disciples because it took him, like free-flowing water, beyond the river-banks of what was culturally and religiously familiar and into an exchange with someone with whom custom forbade him to speak at all. Jesus, in his outreach, embraced difference and new horizons. His ministry transcended boundaries. He invited his disciples to be aware of God’s action in places and people they were
inclined to avoid: Zacchaeus, a Syro-Phoenician woman, Roman centurions, a repentant thief. As water bringing life to all who thirst, he showed himself interested in every parched area of the world; and in every parched area of the world he can thus be welcomed, for all who are thirsty can understand what living water means. This image of living water can give life to all Jesuits as servants of Christ in his mission because, having tasted this water themselves, they will be eager to offer it to anyone who thirsts and to reach out to people beyond frontiers — where water may not yet have welled up — to bring a new culture of dialogue to a rich, diverse, and multi-faceted world.

**Arrest and Imprisonment of Pedro Arrupe, SJ, 28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus**

After the December 7, 1941, bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese security forces arrested Arrupe on suspicion of espionage. He was kept in solitary confinement. Arrupe described the privation and uncertainty he suffered as he waited for the disposition of his case. He missed celebrating the Eucharist most of all. In the midst of his suffering, Arrupe experienced a special moment of grace. On Christmas night, 1941, Arrupe heard a group of people gathering outside his cell door. He could not see them and wondered if the time of his execution had come.

> Suddenly, above the murmur that was reaching me, there arose a soft, sweet, consoling Christmas carol, one of the songs which I had myself taught to my Christians. I was unable to contain myself. I burst into tears. They were my Christians who, heedless of the danger of being themselves imprisoned, had come to console me. (Pedro Arrupe: Essential Writings, Kevin Burke, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books 2004, p. 57)

After the few minutes of song, Arrupe reflected in the presence of Jesus, who would soon descend onto the altar during the Christmas celebration: “I felt that he also descended into my heart, and that night I made the best spiritual communion of all my life.” (Ibid. p. 58)

When the security forces came after 33 days to release him from captivity, Arrupe was convinced that they were coming to execute him. The experience of captivity filled him with a deep inner calm founded on a radical trust in God.

**Music: “O Lord, Hear My Prayer” (Taizé)** - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAm76QabWfY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAm76QabWfY)

**Other Resources**

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: [http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041414.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041414.cfm)
Tuesday, April 15

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to feel sorrow and compassion, so that I may be united with the Lord Jesus in his Passion.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041514.cfm

Jn 13:21-33, 36-38
Reclining at table with his disciples, Jesus was deeply troubled and testified, “Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” The disciples looked at one another, at a loss as to whom he meant. One of his disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining at Jesus’ side. So Simon Peter nodded to him to find out whom he meant. He leaned back against Jesus’ chest and said to him, “Master, who is it?” Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I hand the morsel after I have dipped it.” So he dipped the morsel and took it and handed it to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot. After Judas took the morsel, Satan entered him. So Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” Now none of those reclining at table realized why he said this to him. Some thought that since Judas kept the money bag, Jesus had told him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or to give something to the poor. So Judas took the morsel and left at once. And it was night.

When he had left, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, ‘Where I go you cannot come,’ so now I say it to you.”

“The Taking of Christ” by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio
Simon Peter said to him, “Master, where are you going?”
Jesus answered him,
“Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, though you will follow later.”
Peter said to him,
“Master, why can I not follow you now?
I will lay down my life for you.”
Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me?
Amen, amen, I say to you, the cock will not crow before you deny me three times.”

Reflection Questions

1. At the Last Supper, Jesus foretold of his betrayer. In fact, we have two disciples who will betray—Judas Iscariot and Simon Peter. The difference is that Judas, in realizing his sin of betrayal, took his own life in despair and darkness. Peter, on the other hand, experienced the Lord’s loving and forgiving gaze, which led to his conversion. He went out and wept bitterly. How have I experienced the loving, forgiving gaze of Christ that purifies and consoles me?

2. When I am weak but place trust in God, I am in fact strong. There is a quiet reassurance and deep connection with the mystery of Christ’s suffering that gives meaning to my own suffering and brokenness. When have I experienced suffering and darkness that have led me back to the Lord in faith and trust? What do I need to turn over to the Lord so that I may echo the sentiment of St. Paul in that “it is not I who longer live, but Christ who lives in me”?

Reflection

Jesus’ Prayer for Peter and God’s Free Gift from “Journeying with the Lord: Reflections for Everyday” by Cardinal Carlos Maria Martini, SJ:

Like a cold shower, the words of Jesus strike Peter: “‘Simon, Simon! Satan, you must know, has got his wish to sift you all like wheat; but I have prayed for you Simon, that your faith may not fail, and once you have recovered, you in your turn must strengthen your brothers.’ ‘Lord,’ he answered, ‘I would be ready to go to prison with you, and to death.’ Jesus replied, ‘I tell you, Peter, by the time the cock crows today you will have denied three times that you know me’ ” (Lk 22:31-34).

How does Peter take these important words: “You must strengthen your brothers”?

Evidently, he assumes that he is capable of assuming the responsibility that the message contains: “Lord, I am ready to go with You to face prison and death.” Because we know what happens next, we think of how presumptuous Peter is in making such claims. But the words are so beautiful; words that every Christian should be able to affirmatively say. So, what is bad about them, which will help us to understand how Peter fell? Peter truly expresses what he feels, but it’s clear that he didn’t hear what Jesus was telling him: “Satan has got his wish to sift you all like wheat; but I have prayed for you, Simon.” If Peter had heard this, he would have said: “Lord, thank You for praying for me. I am so weak; I can do so little. Stay near to me.” Instead, Peter takes the task on as a privilege which he can
handle by his own strength. He misses that the task can only be accomplished through the gift of the Lord. He thus sets himself up for his fall. In fact, the Gospel is precisely the free gift of God. It’s the salvation that God freely gives to the sinner. When we receive it with a grateful spirit, with humility and just recognition of its source, we are in our proper place. We can thus begin to appropriate it, digest it and control any situation. Peter thinks he is not afraid, yet his pride comes from his fear of the cross. He is sincere, but his fault lies in his desire to be first. In a theological sense, we could say that he wants to be the Lord’s savior.

**The Immediate Experience of God from “Ignatius Speaks to a Jesuit Today” by Karl Rahner, SJ:**

As you know, I wanted — as I used to say then — to “help souls”: in other words, to say something to people about God and God’s grace, and about Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen one, that would open up and redeem their freedom into God’s. I wanted to say this just as it had always been said in the Church, and yet I thought — and this opinion was true — that I could say what was old in a new way. Why? I was convinced that I had encountered God, at first incipiently during my sickness at Loyola and then decisively during my time as a hermit at Manresa; and I wanted to communicate such experience to others as best one could.

When I make this sort of claim to have experienced God immediately, this assertion does not need to be linked to a theological disquisition on the essence of this kind of immediate experience of God. Nor do I want to talk about all the phenomena that accompany such experiences — phenomena that of course have their own histories and their own distinctive God and human experience characteristics. I’m not talking about pictorial visions, symbols, words heard; I’m not talking about the gift of tears and the like.

I’m just saying that I experienced God, the nameless and un-searchable one, silent yet near, in the Trinity that is His turning to me. I have also experienced God — and indeed principally — beyond all pictorial imagining. God, who, when He comes to us out of His own self in grace, just cannot be mistaken for anything else. Such a conviction perhaps sounds innocuous in your pious trade, working as it does with the most elevated words available. But fundamentally it is outrageous: outrageous for me from where I am, in the past-all-graspsness of God that is experienced here in a quite different way again; outrageous for the godlessness of your own time, a godlessness that is actually in the end only doing away with the idols — idols that the previous age, with an innocence that was at the same time appalling, equated with the ineffable God. Why shouldn’t I say that this godlessness extends right into the Church? After all, the Church throughout its history, in union with the crucified one, is meant to be what happens when the gods are abolished.

**Other Resources**

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041514.cfm
Wednesday, April 16

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to feel sorrow and compassion, so that I may be united with the Lord Jesus in his Passion.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041614.cfm

Mt 26:14-25

One of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, “What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?” They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples approached Jesus and said, “Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?” He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The teacher says, “My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples.”’ The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered, and prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, “Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” Deeply distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another, “Surely it is not I, Lord?” He said in reply, “He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will betray me.
The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born.”

Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply, “Surely it is not I, Rabbi?”

He answered, “You have said so.”

Reflection Questions

Judas’ betrayal sets in motion the final stage of Jesus’ Passion. The irony is that there are several betrayals implicated beyond Judas’ betrayal. We learn of Peter’s denial, Jesus’ anguish of being abandoned in the Garden, even his closest disciples ran away in fear — all leaving Jesus in utter desolation and abandonment. However, Jesus seems to accept all the abandonment at a much deeper level of consciousness that reveals his love rather than hatred, something for us to contemplate in our own life. He enters into a depth of isolation and darkness, which he alone must endure for our sake.

1. Betrayals and abandonment are a part of our human reality that needs transformation and forgiveness. How have I experienced hurts and abandonment that are in need of healing and reconciliation? How have I been less than faithful in following the Lord to the cross?

Reflection

“Encouraging the dynamism initiated by GC34” from “Collaboration at the Heart of Mission” - Decree 6 of the Society of Jesus’ General Congregation 35:

We are humbled and grateful that so many — inspired as we have been by the vocation of Ignatius and the tradition of the Society — have chosen both to work with us and to share our sense of mission and our passion to reach out to the men and women of our broken but lovable world. We are enriched by members of our own faith, but also by people from other religious traditions, those women and men of good will from all nations and cultures, with whom we labor in seeking a more just world. Rich is the harvest. In many countries, important Jesuit works depend largely on the generous, loyal, and skilled collaboration of women and men of diverse religious and humanistic convictions. As the Holy Father affirmed our ministry and mission, saying to us, “The Church needs you,” we must in turn look to our collaborators in mission and say, with gratitude and affection, that the call we have received is a call shared by us together.

From “He Leadeth Me” by Walter J. Ciszek, SJ:

Across that threshold I had been afraid to cross, things suddenly seemed so very simple. There was but a single vision, God, who was all in all; there was but one will that directed all things, God’s will. I had only to see it, to discern it in every circumstance in which I found myself, and let myself be ruled by it. God is in all things, sustains all things, directs all things. To discern this in every situation and circumstance, to see His will in all things, was to accept each circumstance and situation and let oneself be borne along in perfect confidence and trust. Nothing could separate me from Him, because He was in all things. No danger could threaten me, no fear could shake me, except the fear

http://jesuits.org/greaterlove
of losing sight of Him. The future, hidden as it was, was hidden in His will and therefore acceptable to me no matter what it might bring. The past, with all its failures, was not forgotten; it remained to remind me of the weakness of human nature and the folly of putting any faith in self. But it no longer depressed me. I looked no longer to self to guide me, relied on it no longer in any way, so it could not again fail me. By renouncing, finally and completely, all control of my life and future destiny, I was relieved as a consequence of all responsibility. I was freed thereby from anxiety and worry, from every tension, and could float serenely upon the tide of God’s sustaining providence in perfect peace of soul.

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041614.cfm
Holy Thursday, April 17

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to feel sorrow and compassion, so that I may be united with the Lord Jesus in his Passion.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041714-evening-mass.cfm

Jn 13:1-15
Before the feast of Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to pass from this world to the Father. He loved his own in the world and he loved them to the end. The devil had already induced Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot, to hand him over. So, during supper, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, he rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and dry them with the towel around his waist. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Master, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing, you do not understand now, but you will understand later.” Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet.” Jesus answered him, “Unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me.” Simon Peter said to him, “Master, then not only my feet, but my hands and head as well.” Jesus said to him, “Whoever has bathed has no need except to have his feet washed, for he is clean all over; so you are clean, but not all.” For he knew who would betray him; for this reason, he said, “Not all of you are clean.”

“Last Supper” by Bob Gilroy, SJ
So when he had washed their feet
and put his garments back on and reclined at table again,
he said to them, “Do you realize what I have done for you?
You call me ‘teacher’ and ‘master,’ and rightly so, for indeed I am.
If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet,
you ought to wash one another’s feet.
I have given you a model to follow,
so that as I have done for you, you should also do.”

Reflection Questions

At the Last Supper, Jesus broke bread and shared a meal with his beloved disciples. Be present and listen to the conversation as Jesus foretold of his betrayal. Feel the sadness and confusion among the disciples.

1. After the meal, Jesus took on the role of a servant in washing the feet of the disciples. Watch how much he loved them and poured out his love in the humbled act of foot washing. See how Peter refused to allow Jesus to wash his feet. What do I need to surrender to the Lord so that he can wash my feet and purify me from my sinfulness?
2. How am I moved to love those around me by Christ’s selfless love? Who are the people that I am called to wash their feet out of an act of love, forgiveness or reconciliation?

Reflection

From “Essential Writings” by Pedro Arrupe, SJ:

The [Spiritual] Exercises are, in the last analysis, a method in the pedagogy of love — the pedagogy, that is, of the most pure charity toward God and toward one’s neighbor. They root out carnal and worldly love from the human heart, thus opening it to the beams of God’s love. A demanding love it is, calling forth in a person a response of love and of service. Service, which is itself love. This is the message of the very last paragraph of the book of the Exercises. “The zealous service of God our Lord out of pure love should be esteemed above all.” In the Exercises we find terms and concepts which are logically reducible to one another: the “glory of God,” for example, can be replaced by the “service of God.” The same may be said of “praise” and “reverence.” Only one term is final and irreducible to another: love.

From “Collaboration at the Heart of Mission” - Decree 6 of the Society of Jesus’ General Congregation 35:

The local Jesuit superior and local Jesuits do much to foster the connection between a Jesuit ministry and the Society. All Jesuits, but especially those assigned to a work, can help to foster a spirit of discernment and collaboration by their example and their willingness to share their lives with others. Likewise, our communities, as apostolic centers and not as mere residences, are called to explore how their hospitality may promote collaboration.
...the powerful spirit acknowledged and encouraged by GC 34 has not been idle, and for every challenge greater creativity and zeal have been the response.

Numerous programs of Ignatian formation have grown up around the world, adapted to various religious and cultural contexts. The foundational grace of the Spiritual Exercises is more widely available and provides a common language and experience, in which collaboration in mission is rooted and inspired. Increasing numbers of Jesuit works are directed by committed lay people, by other religious, and by diocesan clergy. The members of the Society — priests and brothers, those formed and those in formation — have a greater awareness of shared responsibility with others for the mission and ministry of the Society. Further, the Society has been enriched by our encounter with diverse communities of dialogue and cooperation. Lay and religious, women and men, indigenous persons and those of different religious and spiritual experiences: all these have changed us and nurtured in us a greater sense of the God “in whom we live and move and have our being.”

The grace of these years is reflected in both more extensive and deeper apostolic collaboration, which places all — Jesuits and others — with the Son.

“The Last Supper” by Leonardo da Vinci

Music: Stay with Me (Taizé) - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmAOcHqvS0Q

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041714.cfm
Good Friday, April 18
(Friday of the Passion of the Lord)

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to feel sorrow and compassion, so that I may be united with the Lord Jesus in his Passion.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041814.cfm

Is 52:13-53:12

See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted. Even as many were amazed at him—so marred was his look beyond human semblance and his appearance beyond that of the sons of man—so shall he startle many nations, because of him kings shall stand speechless; for those who have not been told shall see, those who have not heard shall ponder it.

Who would believe what we have heard? To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? He grew up like a sapling before him, like a shoot from the parched earth; there was in him no stately bearing to make us look at him, nor appearance that would attract us to him. He was spurned and avoided by people, a man of suffering, accustomed to infirmity, one of those from whom people hide their faces, spurned, and we held him in no esteem.

Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, while we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted. But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins;

“Christ of St John of the Cross” by Salvador Dali
upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole,
by his stripes we were healed.
We had all gone astray like sheep,
each following his own way;
but the LORD laid upon him
the guilt of us all.

Though he was harshly treated, he submitted
and opened not his mouth;
like a lamb led to the slaughter
or a sheep before the shearsers,
he was silent and opened not his mouth.
Oppressed and condemned, he was taken away,
and who would have thought any more of his destiny?
When he was cut off from the land of the living,
and smitten for the sin of his people,
a grave was assigned him among the wicked
and a burial place with evildoers,
though he had done no wrong
nor spoken any falsehood.
But the LORD was pleased
to crush him in infirmity.

If he gives his life as an offering for sin,
he shall see his descendants in a long life,
and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished through him.

Because of his affliction
he shall see the light in fullness of days;
through his suffering, my servant shall justify many,
and their guilt he shall bear.
Therefore I will give him his portion among the great,
and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty,
because he surrendered himself to death
and was counted among the wicked;
and he shall take away the sins of many,
and win pardon for their offenses.

**Jn 18:1-19:42**
The Passion of Our Lord according to John: [http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041814.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041814.cfm)

**Reflection Questions**

1. We continue to reflect on the prophetic Suffering Servant from Isaiah who allowed himself to be handed over, which leads us to the Passion of Jesus and the scandal of the cross. Jesus enters into the depth of humanity and subjected himself to our sinfulness to complete his salvific mission.
2. Read the Passion meditatively and allow the unfolding events of Jesus’ Passion to take hold of me. Be at the foot of the cross with Mary and the faithful women disciples as they silently witnessed Jesus dying. All is finished as Jesus bowed his head and emptied himself on the cross for us.

Reflection

From “The Divine Milieu” by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ:

The gift which you call on me to make to these brothers and sisters — the only gift which my heart can make — is not the overwhelming tenderness of those specially privileged affections which you have placed in our lives as the most potent created factor of our interior growth, but something less sweet, but just as real, and more strong. Between myself and others, and with the help of your Eucharist, you want the fundamental attraction (which is already dimly felt in all love, if it is strong) to be made manifest — what mystically transforms the myriad of rational creatures into a kind of single monad in you, Jesus Christ. You want me to be drawn towards “others,” not by simple personal sympathy, but by what is much higher: the united affinities of a world for itself, and of that world for God.

You do not ask for the psychologically impossible — since what I am asked to cherish in the vast and unknown crowd is never anything save one and the same personal being in which is yours.

Nor do you call for any hypocritical protestations of love for neighbor, because — since my heart cannot reach your person except at the depths of all that is most individually and concretely personal in every “other” — it is to “others” themselves, and not to some vague entity around them, that my charity is addressed.

No, you do not ask anything false or unattainable of me. You merely, through your revelation and your grace, force what is most human in me to become conscious of itself at last. Humanity was sleeping — it is still sleeping — imprisoned in the narrow joys of its little closed loves. A tremendous spiritual power is slumbering in the depths of our multitude, which will manifest itself only when we have learnt to break down the barriers of our egoisms and, by a fundamental recasting of our outlook, raise ourselves up to the habitual and practical vision of universal realities.

Jesus, Savior of human activity to which you have given meaning, Savior of human suffering to which you have given living value, be also the Savior of human unity; compel us to discard our pettiness, and to venture forth, resting upon you, into the uncharted oceans of charity.
Christ Comes through the Ruins
by Thomas Merton

Slowly, slowly
Comes Christ through
the ruins
Seeking the lost disciple
A timid one
Too literate
To believe words
So she hides.

Music: “Jesus, Remember Me” (Taizé) -
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5g6Q-uSV714

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website:
http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041814.cfm
Holy Saturday, April 19

Today’s Grace

I pray for the grace to love and follow Christ more closely, which bring me to identify with the Lord in his suffering and death in order to experience new life in his resurrection.

Scripture/Reading

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/lk/23:56

Lk 23:56
And on the Sabbath day they rested, as the Law required.

Reading via the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/2cor/5:14

2 Cor 5:14-15
The love of Christ overthrows us when we reflect that if one man has died for all,
Then all men should be dead;
And the reason he died for all was so that living men should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised to life for them.

Reflection Questions

1. This day must have been the longest Sabbath ever for the disciples. Imagine what Mary, John, Peter, Mary Magdalene, John Mark, Joseph of Arimathea and all of the disciples did on that first Holy Saturday. Jesus was in the tomb. They were alone. They rested. And they went over and over and over the events of the last two days. Imagine what they might have said to one another. What would you have said to them?

2. The Lenten journey has led to this liminal moment when I am willing to surrender and faithfully follow the Lord through the mystery of his Passion. I reflect on the past two weeks and how I have experienced the grace of vision: the vision to see, the vision to hear, the vision to read the signs of the times — in order to discern more deeply how we are called, as companions in the Lord, to follow Christ and to serve him in our work, our ministries and our lives.
Reflection

“Folly for Christ and the Glory of God” from “The Road from La Storta” by Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ (p. 91):

Thus Ignatius does not oppose the folly of the cross to the glory of God in the sense that one would truly wish to be a fool for Christ, but then his glory would be at variance with it. There does not exist one Gospel of the glory of God and another of the cross. One and one alone is the triumphant Easter proclamation: “By his death he has conquered death.” In the exercise of the Kingdom [95], Ignatius considers the continuing work and mission of Christ as the entering of all humanity into the glory of the Father by its first following Christ on his way of the cross: “in bearing all wrongs and all abuse and all poverty, both actual and spiritual” [98]. To carry out the mission of Christ, which consists in proclaiming the Gospel of the glory of the Father to humankind which understands glory in a totally different way, is to make one’s own the Gospel of the cross. This latter does not consist first of all in suffering and death, but primarily in vibrant life that comes through losing one’s own self in self-gift and self-surrender so that the glory of the Father may shine forth in the lives of our brothers and sisters. It is the glory of the Father that will give a concrete form and expression to our mission of “carrying his cross.”

Selections from the conclusion of “The First Jesuits” by John O’Malley, SJ:

Leadership is a gift difficult to analyze, but it consists to a large extent in vision, in the ability to see how at a given juncture change is most consistent with one’s scope than staying the course. It consists as well in the courage and self-possession required to make the actual decision to change to convince others of the validity and viability of the new direction. Such was Ignatius’ vision and courage about the schools. He had another ability that is equally important for a leader. He could recognize and utilize talents that complimented his own.

According to Polanco, Ignatius possessed “in an uncommon degree certain natural gifts from God: great energy in undertaking extraordinary difficult tasks, great constancy in pursuing them, and great prudence in seeing them to completion.”

Other Resources

View the daily readings at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops website: http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/041914.cfm

Moved to Greater Love contributors: