



My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have reached Holy Week. In this holiest week of the year, we remember the central mysteries of our faith – that God died and rose for us. Today, as we celebrate Passion Sunday, we read through the Passion account according to St. Mark. It is a fitting start to this truly *holy* week, reminding us what it cost for us to be united to God – what **sin cost God**.

There are some theologians who think that God had always planned the Incarnation – how God took on our human nature. In the Divine Plan, this would be necessary in order to allow humanity into the heart of God's love. However, after Adam and Eve sinned, there was need for more than just uniting humanity and divinity – there was also the need to overcome the immense chasm created by sin, which by its very nature rejects God (remember, every sin is saying that we don't trust God). Jesus went to the Cross so that the love of God, incarnate in a human nature, could bridge that gap.

St. Mark so beautifully shows us the love of Jesus in today's Passion reading. I encourage you, take time with the Passion narrative. Read through it this week. Maybe you can break it up into sections to read a bit each day. Enter into the mystery of God's incredible love for you.

You'll find that His love inspired this woman of Bethany to spend great money to anoint Him. His love wants to inspire self-giving love within us, too.

You'll find that Jesus shares with His disciples His very Body and Blood. He longs for us to come into Communion with Him as He gives us the Eucharist.

You'll find that Jesus longs for human companionship, even as Peter, James and John sleep in the Garden of Gethsemane. He longs for *us* to keep Him company, consoling His Heart.

You'll find that God is put on trial, judged by the Sanhedrin and by Pilate. He calls us to look at our hearts to see how *we judge God*.

You'll see the King of the Universe allowing Himself to be mocked. He wants us to *praise* Him for all the mockery He receives.

You'll see Jesus crying out from the Cross, "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**" (Mark 15:34). He shows us that there is no suffering, no despair, no pain, no emptiness that God has not experienced with us, that He knows every trial and pain – physical, emotional or spiritual – that we can possibly know... and He redeems it.

You'll see the power of the death of our God, as the Roman Centurion recognizes the truth of Jesus, as he says, "**Truly this man was the Son of God!**" (Mark 15:39). He invites us to make an act of faith in who Jesus is – not just an intellectual assent, but a giving of our whole lives to Jesus, the Lord, the King, our God.

Take the time this Holy Week, to walk with Jesus through His mind-boggling act of love for us by dying and rising for you, for me.