

# Online Retreat Guide - Week 28

## Jesus Surrenders to his Passion.

The photo to the right was taken in the Jesuit chapel at the University of Central American in San Salvador, El Salvador. This is the Jesuit community whose members were brutally assassinated, along with their housekeeper and her daughter. This photo is one of the stations of the cross in the chapel showing, in powerful drawings, the images of the unjust torture of innocents.

Throughout the centuries, the account of the passion of Jesus has been told to help believers understand the mystery of suffering and how Jesus' surrender defeats the power of sin and death.

At this point in our retreat, we are prepared to contemplate, in detail, the passion of Jesus. Our desire is to enter into the gospel story and to be there with Jesus. We want to be touched by the power of this drama. The one we love, and want so much to be with, invites us into his story to experience his suffering, with him. The depth of our compassion for him leads to an even deeper intimacy.

Take each part of the story and experience its meaning. The garden struggle to surrender; the betrayal, the arrest and abandonment by his disciples; the trials; the mockery, the crowning with thorns, the beating, and the way of the



[Click on photo to see larger image and Photo Gallery.](#)

Photos by Don Doll, S.J. selected to support our prayer each week.

## [Getting Started this Week](#)

Some practical helps for this week's prayer.

## [For the Journey](#)

Reflections by Larry Gillick, S.J. as helps for the journey.

## [In these or similar words](#)

St. Ignatius might say: "Speak with Our Lord, as friend to friend, in these or similar words."

## [Readings](#)

Some readings that are chosen

cross are scenes we want to become very much a part of our consciousness this week.

Throughout each day this week, we want to know the profound love of Jesus for us. As we go through the ordinary struggles of living, and face the most difficult challenges of our lives, we want to experience Jesus' solidarity with us. As we contemplate upon the meaning of his passion, we want to see his solidarity with all who have, are and ever will suffer.

Use the resources to the right to get started, and enter these reflections more deeply. We have added an online Stations of the Cross, to offer this powerful centuries old devotion as a resource for our journey this week and next week.

Every night, let us give thanks for the graces we receive by walking through our lives more conscious of the passionate love of Jesus for us.

to fit this week.

## [Prayers](#)

Written prayers by others sometimes helps us find words ourselves.

## [Stations of the Cross](#)

Take the journey with Jesus along the way of the cross.

## [A Place to Share](#)

At any time this week, if you have anything you'd like to share, that has touched you, you can share it by leaving a note here, even anonymously.

## [Read the Sharing](#)

Read what others have shared about their prayer or graces.

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# Online Retreat Photo Gallery



**" He suffered and endured great pain for us.  
He was wounded and crushed because of our sins;  
by taking our punishment,  
he made us completely well.  
He was painfully abused, but he did not complain.  
He was silent, like a lamb being led to the butcher;  
as quiet as sheep having its wool cut off.  
He was condemned to death without a fair trial.  
Who could have imagined what would happen to him?  
Although he is innocent,  
he will take the punishment for the sins of others,  
so that many of them will no longer be guilty.  
The Lord will reward him with honor and power  
for sacrificing his life.  
Others thought he was a sinner,  
but he suffered for our sins  
and asked God to forgive us."**

**Isaiah 53:4-5, 7-8 11-12 .**

NB: You may use this photo as the wallpaper for your desktop throughout this week by right mouse clicking (with a pc) on the picture, and choosing "Set as Wallpaper."

Used with permission.  
<http://magis.creighton.edu/~dolls/>

# Some Practical Help for Getting Started This Week.

We begin this week by reading [Matthew's account](#) of Jesus' passion. It is perhaps the most familiar story in our imagination, but we can re-fresh it by letting it become the conscious focus of our week. This will give us vivid images that we can reflect upon the context of our every day life this week. (The titles below are links to that part of Matthew's gospel.)

## [The Last Supper](#)

We reflected on the Last Supper last week. Now we focus on it as the beginning of the passion. When we read about Judas' betrayal and Peter's promise never to deny him, we have fruit for our week. We can say, with Peter, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never say I don't know you." Throughout the week, I can become more highly conscious of times I "hide" how much I know Jesus.

## [The Garden](#)

This is a powerful image of Jesus, asking his disciples to pray with him. Instead, they fall asleep. All week, in small in-between times, we can remind ourselves how much Jesus wants us to be with him in prayer about his passion this week. It is important for us to see Jesus agonize in prayer over his surrender. His words can come to us throughout the week, to shape the way we make our choices to open ourselves to God's desires in us. To pause here to be with Jesus, as he is kissed by a betraying friend and as all his friends just run away, is a powerful communion with the one we love in a moment of deep abandonment.

## [The Religious Trial](#)

Caiaphas and the religious leaders can't find an opening in their hearts for him. How painful it must be for Jesus to face his failure to win over the very people he came to save. To mock his self revelation as the indictment for his execution must have stung

**bitterly. All week I can focus on this part of his passion, as I observe how little he is accepted in so much of our culture today.**

## **Judas and Peter**

**They both betray him. Judas can't perceive how God could forgive him, and he kills himself. How much Jesus must have grieved Judas' despair. Peter becomes transformed by his denial. He is able to be used by Jesus, to lead in great humility and gratitude.**

## **The Roman Trial**

**This is full of ironies. He will not have his death sentence commuted. Pilate will wash his hands of the whole affair, and will say he finds him innocent, but then have him whipped and executed. We can place this trial in our memory this week as we are filled with a sense of sadness, outrage, gratitude for what Jesus went through, for me.**

## **The Way to Crucifixion**

**We have provided an online prayer experience, [The Stations of the Cross](#), to help with this part of the contemplation on the passion. Perhaps we can do one or two "stations" a day, to enter more deeply into the journey of Jesus into intimacy with our suffering. The grace we desire is to experience a growing compassion with Jesus, and to know most intimately, that this is all an experience of his love, for me.**

**Pray with [Psalm 22](#). The gospel writers must have found it to be a powerful source of inspiration about how Jesus must have used this prayer in his struggle and trust in God.**

**Begin each day by focusing on a part of this mystery, perhaps just for a few moments while doing something very routine (putting on slippers, while showering, while dressing). Throughout the day, recall these reflections in the background of our consciousness. Notice the mystery of the passion of Jesus, revealed in the smallest of things I see and experience in my day. End each day, expressing some gratitude for what I am learning and feeling in Jesus' passion this week.**

# For the Journey

**We move with Jesus this week from the Upper Room where He washed the feet of His friends to the Garden of Obedience where He washes the earth with His blood-like sweat. He is separated from all His supports except that of His Father with Whom He now speaks face to face.**

**This week of watching moves us into a silence and a humility that all this is for me and us. The stage is cleared of all other characters and we join the Apostles off to the side. They have seen Him pray alone before and so drift off to wait for the next exciting installment of His and their lives. We in our turn are accustomed to this scene and we know what is coming soon. For just some time, we watch this Holy Man in spiritual combat. There is the inner conflict in Him between His human desires to live into many exciting installments, and His divinity which has been molded to conform to His Father's Will through the installments of His entire life.**

**There was the Garden of Disobedience where this drama began. God's love for us was interrupted by our indulgent love for our selves. There was a tree from which we were not to eat. Now we watch Jesus, the New Adam kneeling in a Garden, fully aware of the good and evil around Him, preparing to eat of the fruit of the tree which will bring us all back to life. Evil is about to have its way in one last grand hurrah. It is silent now and He hears what or senses a presence of the divine Good which He has heard before, that He is the Beloved. He is the Good, Who will soon struggle with the forces of disobedience.**

**The noise of these forces intrudes on our silent watchings. Abandonment and denial become central characters, but keep your eyes on His. He receives the challenges to His goodness from the soldiers and His friend Judas. We hear Him respond, "I am He." He**

**begins His final hours of fidelity to Who He knows Himself to be, the "Anointed", the Lamb now being led to the sacrifice.**

**These prayer-times for us are quiet and sensitive. We make ourselves available to be impressed by the God-Made-Man struggling to reveal to us His faithful love and the importance of our fidelity to who we are. We also are the anointed led into our own struggles against the forces of evil. Watch His eyes as He looks for Peter during and after Peter's own encounter with his failures. Jesus is not a puppet playing out some charade of life. Listen to the noise around His silence and watch His physical responses to the abuse and violence.**

**With Ignatius, we have watched the Creator hand over all creation to us. In our prayer we have seen God handing over to us personal gifts and mercies of all kinds. This week we watch Jesus handing over His body and all for us. He also hands on to us the invitations to stay faithful in our own struggles between our good and our evil. Watch His eyes as they meet your own.**



## In these or similar words

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Dear Jesus,

I came to prayer this week to be with you in your suffering, but the first thing I saw was the photo for the week. I enlarged it and stared at it. What does this have to do with you? I want to pray about and for you, not some people I don't even know. But wait. Maybe my agenda isn't the same as yours.

I look at the photo of the drawing from El Salvador that has been made into one of the stations of the cross. I see the whip marks across the backs of this man and woman. The horrible way their bleeding hands are tied up behind them. I can only see their backs, but I realize that the woman has no top on. She must feel so vulnerable, exposed and helpless, as her persecutors attempt to take away every shred of dignity she has.

And I stay with you in the gospel, as you are whipped, beaten, mocked and stripped. I watch as you struggle to surrender yourself to God. I see the fear and vulnerability you must feel, even as you give your total trust to God. You never stop praying as they batter you with questions, treat you with derision and condescension. You are with your Father in spirit because that is the only way you know to continue this journey God sent you on.

This week I will walk with you and spend time with you in these events. I will again join you at the Last Supper and in the Garden. I can't bear to watch as you are in the trial and I feel so helpless watching you, my dear friend, be pushed into this inevitable death. I know these next hours will be so terrible and I want to be there for you, but I find myself hiding with Peter, pretending I don't know you, afraid for myself.

It is only as I do the [Stations of the Cross](#), that I can take each step with you in this. I can walk with you each little way as I see how you have done all of this for me. How can I thank you for all you have done? I will carry those images with me throughout this week.

**Then I look again at the photo of those two people. I want to be with you in your familiar story this week. But I keep thinking of the people in this photo. What happened to them? How have they been tortured and abused in your name? Your story is old and familiar to me. Theirs is not. And yet they are very real too. Where are those very real people today, Jesus? Are they still alive? Where are you, Jesus?**

**I look at the photo again and now I see you. How could I have missed you before? You've been there all along, standing with them as they are whipped, tied, naked and vulnerable. You are next to them in their pain and suffering, sharing it with them, there for them, bringing them closer to God.**

**Thank you, Jesus, for being with them in a way I cannot. Thank you for being with me. Please, let me be with you in each moment of your agony this week, as I try to recognize you in the daily sufferings of my life.**

# Readings for Week 28

**"The Lord keeps me from being disgraced."**

**Isaiah 50:1- 7**

**"My God, my God,  
why have you deserted me?"**

**Psalm 22**

**"He obeyed God  
and even died on a cross."**

**Philippians 2:6- 11**

**The Passion of our Lord  
according to St. Matthew**

**Matthew 26:14 - 27:66**

# Prayers

## A Prayer to Begin Each Day

### "Soul of Christ"

"Through your passion and death,  
save us, O Lord."

**Intercessions, Morning Prayer, Good Friday**

### "Save me, Lord my God!"

**Psalm 88**

"Send down your abundant blessing."

**Adapted from the Prayer over the People,  
Good Friday**

# Opening Prayer

**It will be very profitable for the one who is to go through the Exercises to enter upon them with magnanimity and generosity toward our Creator and Lord, and to offer Him our entire will and liberty, that His Divine Majesty will dispose of us and all we possess according to His most holy will.**  
- the Spiritual Exercises # 5

**In the Preparatory Prayer I will beg God our Lord for grace that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of the Divine Majesty.**  
- the Spiritual Exercises # 46

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**Lord, I so wish to prepare well for this time.  
I so want to make all of me ready and attentive and available to  
you.**

**Please help me clarify and purify my intentions.**

**I have so many contradictory desires.**

**My activity seems to be so full of busyness  
and running after stuff that doesn't really seem to matter or  
last.**

**I know that if I give you my heart  
whatever I do will follow my new heart.**

**May all that I am today,  
all that I try to do today,  
may all my encounters, reflections,  
even the frustrations and failings  
all place my life in your hands.**

**Lord, my life is in your hands.**

**Please, let this day give you praise.**