

AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE: *Sorrowful Mysteries*

The Agony in the Garden

Mark 14:32-42

And they went to a place which was called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I pray." And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch."

And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt."

And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? 38 Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.

And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to answer him. And he came the third time, and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?"

It is enough; the hour has come; the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

- Do I live my life seeking to do my own will or God's will?
- Do I seek to love God with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength? Do I put anything or anyone above God?
- Do I place my confidence in God's plan for my life?
- Have I told the Father that I love him for creating me and making me his son/daughter?
- When I pray, do I give my God my full self? My full attention? Or do I fall asleep, physically or spiritually... going through the motions of prayer?
- Like a sleeping disciple, do I miss recognizing the needs of others? Am I oblivious to others' suffering?
- Do I have issues with power and control?

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- In what parts of my life have I fallen asleep – because of laziness, apathy, stubbornness or cynicism?
 - Do I knowingly neglect the needs of others even when I am fully capable of helping them?
 - What are my weaknesses of the flesh? Food? Pornography? Alcohol? Drugs? Attention?

Scourging at the Pillar

Mark 15:6-15

“Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner whom they asked. And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he was wont to do for them. And he answered them, ‘Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?’ For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. And Pilate again said to them, ‘Then what shall I do with the man whom you call the King of the Jews?’ And they cried out again, ‘Crucify him.’ And Pilate said to them, ‘Why, what evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Crucify him.’ So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas; and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.”

- Do I allow pride and envy guide the decisions I make in my life?
- Do I behave in a way in order to please the crowd?
- Have I made bad / sinful choices because I lacked courage or wanted to fit in?
- Is my heart one that is full of a desire for justice or tainted with the darkness of jealousy?
- Do I hide my sin behind good intentions?
- Do I defend the truth without being afraid of the consequences?
- What is the pillar to which I am bound to, chained to, in my own life?
- What sin has me in chains and wounds me and has me trapped?
- Where am I desperate for God’s forgiveness and mercy, so that can be free from the mental and spiritual torture in my life?
- Am I unkind or cruel to others? Do I wound others with my words or actions?

Crowning with Thorns

John 15:2-5

“And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and arrayed him in a purple robe; they came up to him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again, and said to them, ‘Behold, I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find no crime in him.’ So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, ‘Here is the man!’

- Do I mock or make fun of others because of their beliefs? Religious or political?
- Do I place a crown of thorns on the head of others?
- Do I honestly see others as my brothers and sisters or do I harbor feelings of racism, prejudice or division?
- Do I metaphorically wear a crown of thorns, which pierces my mind with lies? That I am not worthy of love? That I am not worthy of forgiveness? That I am not good enough?
- Am I truthful? Have I lied? Have I broken trust?
- Do I find myself complaining about my suffering but not take action to remedy my problems?
- Do I engage and participate in humor that respects the dignity of human beings?
- Do I bear wrongdoings with patience and humility?

Carrying of the Cross

Mark 15:19-22

And they struck his head with a reed, and spat upon him, and they knelt down in homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him.

And they compelled a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull)

- What are the crosses of sin that I am carrying with me – today – this week – this month or for years?
- What burdens do I need lifted from my shoulders through the Lord’s forgiveness?

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- What is making my heart and soul heavy with sadness and guilt?
 - While carrying my own cross, who helps me along the way? Who are the Simons in my life? Do I notice them? Appreciate them? Reciprocate their loving actions?
 - When the opportunity presents itself, am I a helper to others?
 - While carrying his cross, Jesus meets his mother. What is my relationship with my parents Do I honor them?
 - Where in my life to fall multiple times? Do I have a habitual sin?
 - What is the sin that I can't seem to get under control?
 - Do I have the strength to get up and try to sin no more?
 - What is my attitude toward suffering? Do I try to avoid it at all costs? Or do I endure hardships patiently?
 - Am I afraid to ask for help? Because I'm ashamed of my brokenness and need of God?

Crucifixion and Death

Luke 23:33; 39-46

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." They divided his garments by casting lots. Above him there was an inscription that read, "This is the King of the Jews." Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last.

1. If I were to die tomorrow, have I had joy? Have I cared?
2. Have I had any idea what it is all for?
3. To what extent do I know the value and place of others in my life?
4. Am I aware of and grateful for the roles others have played in making me, for better or for worse, who and what I am?

5. Am I capable of sacrificing my own desires, pleasures, longings, for the good of others?
6. Can I see and be thankful for the sacrifices of others for me?
7. Do I require praise for my self-giving, or am I willing to make mine an offering “in secret” solely for the good it can produce?
8. Who have I thought I loved? Was my motive self-giving or self-centered?
9. When have I last prayed for someone who hurt me; acted kindly toward someone who offended me; desired the good for someone who hates me?
10. When I pray the Lord’s Prayer, do I take seriously the words of the petition “Forgive us...as we forgive”? Am I willing to forgive others the wrongs they have done to me? Am I willing to ask forgiveness of wrongs I have done to others?
11. How open am I to being healed?
12. Where is God in my life?

Let us pray:

O Good Jesus, who gave yourself to death on the cross, to save sinners, Look upon me, and have pity on me, and give me the light to know my sins, true sorrow for them and a firm purpose of never committing them again.

Let my heart be connected to yours, so that I may be reconciled to you and that you may renew my hope, joy, and peace.

Amen.