

MARK



Since the end of the first century or at the beginning of the second century after Christ, there were texts stating that the second Gospel was the work of Mark. He had accompanied Peter to Rome where he also met Paul and he faithfully put Peter's teaching into writing.

Any reader comparing this Gospel with those of Matthew and Luke will see immediately Mark does not say anything about the birth of Jesus and the years he spent in Nazareth. If we look carefully at the last paragraph of the Gospel (Mk 16:9-20), we will be surprised to see that Mark's early text concluded with the discovery of the empty tomb and it did not mention the appearances of the risen Jesus. In other words, Mark's Gospel seems to be stripped of its beginning and normal end.

However, this is not the case. Mark gave his work the same perimeters that the apostles had assigned to the first documents that determined the catechesis of the Church. Believers were not told all that they would

have liked to know but they were given the essence of what Jesus had said and done (Acts 1:21-22).

The Gospel of Mark consists of two parts. Each one of them starts with a divine manifestation: in the first one, it is the word of God at Jesus' baptism by John and in the second one, it is the Transfiguration. The first part of the Gospel unfolds in Galilee, the province of Jesus and the second one takes us to Judea and Jerusalem, the heart of the Jewish nation. These two parts are like the two sides of the same adventure. The first part shows us the power and the newness of Jesus: the impact of his teachings on the crowds. Then disillusionment sets in and we have the second part. The crowds are no longer following as Jesus refuses to be what they wanted him to be. Finally, we have his death on the cross that seems to cancel his entire mission.

When Jesus died on the cross, the Roman officer admitted that the crucified one was truly the Son of God (Mk 15:39). And this is all that Mark says. It is now up to the evangelizer to give witness to the resurrection and proclaim Jesus Christ as savior, beginning with the scandal of the cross.

MARK



1 ¹This is the beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²It is written in the book of Isaiah, the prophet, “*I am sending my messenger ahead of you, to prepare your way. ³Let the people hear the voice calling in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, level his paths.*”

⁴So John began to baptize in the desert; he preached a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵All Judea and all the people from the city of Jerusalem went out to John to confess their sins, and to be baptized by him in the river Jordan.

⁶John was clothed in camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and honey. ⁷He preached to the people, saying, “After me comes one who is more powerful than I am; ⁸I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit.”

⁹At that time, Jesus came from Nazareth, a town of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And the moment he came up out of the water, heaven opened before him, and he saw the Spirit coming down on him like a dove. ¹¹And these words were heard from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved, the One I have chosen.”

¹²Then the Spirit drove him into the desert. ¹³Jesus stayed in the desert forty days and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, but angels ministered to him.

Jesus calls his first disciples

(Mt 4:12; Lk 4:14)

¹⁴After John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee and began preaching the Good News of God. ¹⁵He said, “The time has come; the kingdom of God is at hand. Change your ways and believe the Good News.”

MARK 1:1-15

Read: Mark introduces Jesus Christ as Son of God and points out the purpose of his work: writing about the Good News. Remember the ministry and teaching of John the Baptist, as well as baptism and the subsequent withdrawal of Jesus into the desert. Jesus, like John, preaches conversion.

Reflect: The Good News is the victory over evil, sin and death. Let's think about the meaning of baptism and conversion in our own life. Does the temptation come directly from Satan (from the Adversary) or through the everyday situations of life?

Pray: Pray for a deeper awareness of the meaning of baptism and ask God not to leave aside our responsibilities to our community and to ourselves.

Act: Live this day with confidence, knowing that Jesus overcomes evil, sin and death.

¹⁶As Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." ¹⁸At once, they abandoned their nets and followed him. ¹⁹Jesus went a little farther on and saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee; they were in their boat mending their nets. ²⁰Immediately, Jesus called them and they followed him, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men.

Jesus teaches and drives out an evil spirit

(Mt 7:28; Lk 4:31)

²¹They went into the town of Capernaum and Jesus taught in the synagogue on the Sabbath day. ²²The people were astonished at the way he taught, for he spoke as one having authority, and not like the teachers of the law.

²³It happened that, a man with an evil spirit was in their synagogue ²⁴and he shouted, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: you are the Holy One of God." ²⁵Then Jesus faced him and said with authority, "Be silent and

come out of this man!" ²⁶The evil spirit shook the man violently and, with a loud shriek, came out of him.

²⁷All the people were astonished, and they wondered, "What is this? With what authority he preaches! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him!" ²⁸And Jesus' fame spread throughout all the country of Galilee.

Jesus heals many

(Mt 8:14; Lk 4:38)

²⁹On leaving the synagogue, Jesus went to the home of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰As Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever, they immediately told him about her. ³¹Jesus went to her and, taking her by the hand, raised her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. ³²That evening, at sundown, people brought to Jesus all the sick and those who had evil spirits: ³³the whole town was pressing around the door. ³⁴Jesus healed many who had various diseases and drove out many demons; but he did not let them speak, for they knew who he was.

Jesus' prayer at night

(Lk 4:42)

³⁵Very early in the morning, before daylight, Jesus went off to a lonely place where he prayed. ³⁶Simon and the others went out also, searching for him; ³⁷and when they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you." ³⁸Then Jesus answered, "Let us go to the nearby villages so that I may preach there too; for that is why I came."

³⁹So Jesus set out to preach in all the synagogues throughout Galilee; he also cast out demons.

Jesus cures a leper

(Mt 8:2; Lk 5:12)

⁴⁰A leper came to Jesus and begged him, "If you want to, you can make me clean." ⁴¹Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do want to; be clean." ⁴²The leprosy left the man at once and he was made clean. ⁴³As Jesus sent the man away, he sternly warned him, ⁴⁴"Don't tell anyone about this, but go and show yourself to the priest; and for the cleansing, bring the offering ordered by Moses; in this way, you will give to them your testimony."

⁴⁵However, as soon as the man went out, he began spreading the news everywhere, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter any town. But even though he stayed in the rural areas, people came to him from everywhere.

MARK 1:16-45

Read: Jesus calls his first disciples. They respond without hesitation. Jesus begins his healing ministry. He has power over all evil: unclean spirits, fever, leprosy.

Reflect: If Jesus has power over all evil, why do we suffer so much? Is it good to ask for physical healing? And what happens if it does not happen? Are the physical pain and suffering related to sin?

Pray: The disciples of Jesus can ask for anything they wish. Pray for the physical healing of someone you know.

Act: Visit a sick person in a hospital.

Jesus forgives and cures a paralytic

(Mt 9:1; Lk 5:17)

2¹After some days, Jesus returned to Capernaum. As the news spread that he was in the house, ²so many people gathered that there was no longer room even outside the door. While Jesus was preaching the word to them, ³some people brought to him a paralyzed man.

⁴The four men who carried him couldn't get near Jesus because of the crowd, so they opened the roof above the room where Jesus was and, through the hole, lowered the man on his mat. ⁵When Jesus saw the faith of these people, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven."

⁶Now, some teachers of the law, who were sitting there, wondered within themselves, ⁷"How can he speak like this, insulting God? Who can forgive sins but God?"

⁸At once, Jesus knew in his spirit what they were thinking and asked, "Why do you wonder? ⁹Is it easier to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your mat and walk?' ¹⁰But now you shall know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins."

And he said to the paralytic, ¹¹“Stand up, take up your mat and go home.” ¹²The man rose and, in the sight of all those people, he took up his mat and went out. All of them were astonished and praised God, saying, “Never have we seen anything like this!”

The call of Levi

(Mt 9:9; Lk 5:27)

¹³When Jesus went out again, beside the lake, a crowd came to him, and he taught them. ¹⁴As he walked along, he saw a tax collector sitting in his office. This was Levi, the son of Alpheus. Jesus said to him, “Follow me!” And Levi got up and followed him.

¹⁵And it so happened that, when Jesus was eating in Levi’s house, tax collectors and sinners sat with him and his disciples; there were a lot of them and they used to follow Jesus.

¹⁶But Pharisees, men educated in the law, when they saw Jesus eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does your master eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

¹⁷Jesus heard them and answered, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor, but sick people do. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

New wine, new skin

(Mt 9:14; Lk 5:33)

¹⁸One day, when the Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist were fasting, some people asked Jesus, “Why is it, that both the Pharisees and the disciples of John fast, but yours do not?” ¹⁹Jesus answered, “How can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. ²⁰But the day will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

²¹No one sews a piece of new cloth on an old coat, because the new patch will shrink and tear away from the old cloth, making a worse tear. ²²And no one puts new wine into old wineskins, for the wine would burst the skins and then both the wine and the skins would be lost. But new wine, new skins!”

(Mt 12:1; Lk 6:1)

²³One Sabbath he was walking through grain fields. As his disciples walked along with him, they began to pick the heads of grain and crush

them in their hands. ²⁴Then the Pharisees said to Jesus, “Look! They are doing what is forbidden on the Sabbath!”

²⁵And he said to them, “Have you never read what David did in his time of need; when he and his men were very hungry? ²⁶He went into the House of God, when Abiathar was High Priest, and ate the bread of offering, which only the priests are allowed to eat and he also gave some to the men who were with him.” ²⁷Then Jesus said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸So the Son of Man is master even of the Sabbath.”

MARK 2:1-28

Read: Jesus heals a paralytic, forgives his sins. The controversy is generated by Jewish leaders. Jesus allows his disciples to break a particular interpretation of the law of the Sabbath.

Reflect: The paralytic does not ask for anything. However, Jesus heals him. Do the actions of the friends of the paralytic suggest something to him? What do you consider to be new and what is old in the parable of wineskins?

Pray: Pray that the leaders of the Church and all Christians in general will always opt for the good, not resorting to only fulfilling norms.

Act: The paralytic’s friends took great pains for him because they loved him. Let us make our actions express our love for those who are closest to us.

Cure of the man with a withered hand

(Lk 6:6; Mt 12:9; Lk 14:1)

3¹Again, Jesus entered the synagogue. A man who had a paralyzed hand was there; ²and some people watched Jesus: would he heal the man on the Sabbath? If he did, they could accuse him.

³Jesus said to the man with the paralyzed hand, “Stand here, in the center.” ⁴Then he asked them, “What does the law allow us to do on the Sabbath, to do good or to do harm? To save life or to kill?” But they were silent.

⁵Then Jesus looked around at them with anger and deep sadness at their hardness of heart. And he said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.”

He stretched it out, and his hand was healed. ⁶As soon as the Pharisees left, they met with Herod's supporters, looking for a way to destroy Jesus.

(Mt 12:15; Lk 6:17)

⁷Jesus and his disciples withdrew to the lakeside and a large crowd from Galilee followed him. A great number of people also came from Judea, ⁸Jerusalem, Idumea, Transjordan, and from the region of Tyre and Sidon for they had heard of all that he was doing.

⁹Because of the crowd, Jesus told his disciples to have a boat ready for him to prevent the people from crushing him. ¹⁰He healed so many that all who had diseases kept pressing toward him to touch him. ¹¹Even the people who had evil spirits, whenever they saw him, they would fall down before him and cry out, "You are the Son of God." ¹²But he warned them sternly not to tell anyone who he was.

The Twelve apostles

(Mt 10:1; Lk 6:12)

¹³Then Jesus went up into the hill country and called those he wanted and they came to him. ¹⁴He appointed Twelve to be with him and he called them 'apostles.' He wanted to send them out to preach; ¹⁵and he gave them authority to drive out demons.

¹⁶These are the Twelve: Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter; ¹⁷James, son of Zebedee, and John his brother, to whom he gave the name Boanerges, which means 'men of thunder'; ¹⁸Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Cananean, ¹⁹and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

The sin against the Spirit

(Mt 12:24; Lk 11:15)

²⁰They went home. The crowd began to gather again and they couldn't even have a meal. ²¹Knowing what was happening, his relatives came to take charge of him. "He is out of his mind," they said. ²²Meanwhile, the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem said, "He is in the power of Beelzebul: the chief of the demons helps him to drive out demons."

²³Jesus called them to him and began teaching them by means of stories or parables. "How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴If a nation is divided

by civil war, that nation cannot stand. ²⁵If a family divides itself into groups, that family will not survive. ²⁶In the same way, if Satan has risen against himself and is divided, he will not stand; he is finished. ²⁷No one can break into the house of a strong man in order to plunder his goods unless he first ties up the strong man. Then indeed, he can plunder his house.

²⁸Truly, I say to you, all sins and all blasphemies that people utter will be forgiven them. ²⁹But whoever slanders the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven. He carries the guilt of his sin forever.”

³⁰This was their sin when they said, “He has an unclean spirit in him.”

Jesus’ true family

(Mt 12:46; Lk 8:19)

³¹Then his mother and his brothers came. As they stood outside, they sent someone to call him. ³²The crowd sitting around Jesus told him, “Your mother and your brothers are outside asking for you.” ³³He replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?”

³⁴And looking around at those who sat there, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. ³⁵Whoever does the will of God is brother and sister and mother to me.”

MARK 3:1-35

Read: Jesus again breaks the law of the Sabbath. He teaches, heals and calls the Twelve. His family thinks he has gone crazy. The Pharisees accuse him of being possessed by Satan. Jesus extends his family ties: everyone who does the will of his Father.

Reflect: Why do you believe that Jesus generates so much conflict? Do you consider that everyone who does God’s will is a family member? How do you understand that the sin against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven?

Pray: The Christian prays as a member of the family of Jesus. Ask God to grant you the grace to do his will at every moment of your life.

Act: Do not be afraid to express your faith in everyday life. Talk to others about what you really believe.

The sower

(Mt 13:1; Lk 8:4)

4¹ Again, Jesus began to teach by the lake; but such a large crowd gathered about him, that he got into a boat and sat in it on the lake, while the crowd stood on the shore. ² He taught them many things through parables. In his teaching he said,

³ “Listen! The sower went out to sow. ⁴ As he sowed, some of the seed fell along a path; and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some of the seed fell on rocky ground where it had little soil; it sprang up immediately because it had no depth; ⁶ but when the sun rose and burned it, it withered, because it had no roots. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorn bushes, and the thorns grew and choked it; so it didn’t produce any grain. ⁸ But some seed fell on good soil, grew and increased and yielded grain; some seed produced thirty times as much, some sixty, and some one hundred times as much.” ⁹ And Jesus added, “Listen then, if you have ears.”

¹⁰ When the crowd went away, some who were present along with the Twelve asked about the parables.

¹¹ He answered them, “The mystery of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But for those outside, everything comes in parables, ¹² so, that, *the more they see, they don’t perceive; the more they hear, they don’t understand; otherwise they would be converted and pardoned.*”

¹³ Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How, then, will you understand any of the parables?”

¹⁴ What the sower is sowing is the word. ¹⁵ Those along the path where the seed fell are people who hear the word, but as soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them.

¹⁶ Other people receive the word like rocky ground. As soon as they hear the word, they accept it with joy. ¹⁷ But they have no roots, so it lasts only a little while. No sooner does trouble or persecution come because of the word than they fall.

¹⁸ Others receive the seed as seed among thorns. After they hear the word, ¹⁹ they are caught up in the worries of this life, false hopes of riches and other desires. All these come in and choke the word so that finally it produces nothing.

²⁰ And there are others who receive the word as good soil. They hear the word, take it to heart and produce: some thirty, some sixty, and some one hundred times as much.”

Parable of the lamp

(Mt 10:26; Lk 8:16)

²¹Jesus also said to them, “When the light comes, is it put under a basket or a bed? Surely it is put on a lampstand. ²²Whatever is hidden will be disclosed and whatever is kept secret will be brought to light. ²³Listen then, if you have ears!”

²⁴And he also said to them, “Pay attention to what you hear. In the measure you give, so shall you receive, and still more will be given to you. ²⁵For to the one who produces something, more will be given; and from him who does not produce anything, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

The seed growing by itself

²⁶Jesus also said, “In the kingdom of God, it is like this: a man scatters seed upon the soil. ²⁷Whether he is asleep or awake, be it day or night, the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. ²⁸The soil produces of itself; first the blade; then the ear; then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹And when it is ripe for harvesting, they take the sickle for the cutting: the time for the harvest has come.”

The mustard seed

(Mt 13:31; Lk 13:18)

³⁰Jesus also said, “What is the kingdom of God like? To what shall we compare it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown, is the smallest of all the seeds scattered upon the soil. ³²But once sown, it grows up and becomes the largest of the plants in the garden; and even grows branches so big that the birds of the air can take shelter in its shade.”

³³Jesus used many such stories, in order to proclaim the word to them in a way that they would be able to understand. ³⁴He would not teach them without parables; but privately, to his disciples, he explained everything.

MARK 4:1-34

Read: Jesus preaches in parables. In the proclamation of the Gospel there will always be a good harvest, even when many seeds do not bear fruit. The kingdom of God grows in silence, but with great force.

Reflect: What does the parable of the sower and its interpretation suggest to you? Think about what you believe and how you live it in your day to day.

Pray: If on this day you have shared many fruits of love, give thanks to God. If not, ask for forgiveness and may the Holy Spirit help you in this.

Act: Perform a brief examination of conscience every night about the events that occurred during the day.

Jesus calms the storm

(Mt 8:18; Lk 8:22)

³⁵On that same day, when evening had come, Jesus said to them, "Let's go across to the other side of the lake." ³⁶So they left the crowd and took him along in the boat he had been sitting in, and other boats set out with him. ³⁷Then a storm gathered and it began to blow a gale. The waves spilled over into the boat so that it was soon filled with water. ³⁸Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion.

They woke him up and said, "Master, don't you care if we drown?" ³⁹And rising up, Jesus rebuked the wind and ordered the sea, "Quiet now! Be still!" The wind dropped, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Why are you so frightened? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹But they were terrified and they said to one another, "Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

The Gerasene demoniac

(Mt 8:28; Lk 8:26)

5¹They arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes. ²No sooner did Jesus leave the boat than he was met by a man with evil spirits who had come from the tombs. ³The man lived among the tombs, and no one could restrain him even with a chain. ⁴He had often been bound with fetters and chains, but he would pull the chains apart and smash the fetters, and no one had the strength to control him. ⁵Night and day he stayed among the tombs on the hillsides and was continually screaming and beating himself with stones.

⁶When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell at his feet ⁷and cried

with a loud voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? For God’s sake, I beg you, do not torment me!” ⁸He said this because Jesus had commanded, “Evil spirit, come out of the man!” ⁹When Jesus asked the evil spirit, “What is your name?” it replied, “Legion is my name, for we are many.” ¹⁰And it kept begging Jesus not to send them out of that region.

¹¹Now a great herd of pigs was feeding on the hillside, ¹²and the evil spirits begged him, “Send us to the pigs, and let us go into them.” ¹³So Jesus let them go. The evil spirits came out of the man and went into the pigs, and immediately the herd rushed down the cliff, and all were drowned in the lake. ¹⁴The herdsmen fled, and reported this in the town and in the countryside. So all the people came to see what had happened.

¹⁵They came to Jesus and saw the man freed of the evil spirits, sitting there clothed and in his right mind; the same man who had been possessed by the legion. They were afraid. ¹⁶And when those who had seen it told what had happened to the man and to the pigs, ¹⁷the people begged Jesus to leave their neighborhood.

¹⁸When Jesus was getting into the boat, the man, who had been possessed, begged to stay with him. ¹⁹Jesus would not let him and said, “Go home to your people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has had mercy on you.” ²⁰So he went throughout the country of Decapolis telling everyone how much Jesus had done for him, and all the people were astonished.

Jesus raises the daughter of Jairus

(Mt 9:18; Lk 8:40)

²¹Jesus then crossed to the other side of the lake; and while he was still on the shore, a large crowd gathered around him. ²²Jairus, an official of the synagogue, came up and, seeing Jesus, threw himself at his feet; ²³and begged him earnestly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may get well and live.”

²⁴Jesus went with him and many people followed, pressing around him. ²⁵Among the crowd was a woman who had suffered from bleeding for twelve years. ²⁶She had suffered a lot at the hands of many doctors and had spent everything she had, but instead of getting better, she was worse. ²⁷Because she had heard about Jesus, this woman came up

behind him and touched his cloak, ²⁸thinking, “If I just touch his clothing, I shall get well.” ²⁹Her flow of blood dried up at once, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her complaint.

³⁰But Jesus was conscious that healing power had gone out from him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?” ³¹His disciples answered, “You see how the people are crowding around you. Why do you ask who touched you?” ³²But he kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³Then the woman, aware of what had happened, came forward trembling and afraid. She knelt before him and told him the whole truth.

³⁴Then Jesus said to her, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace and be free of this illness.”

³⁵While Jesus was still speaking, some people arrived from the official’s house to inform him, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Master any further?” ³⁶But Jesus ignored what they said and told the official, “Do not fear, just believe.” ³⁷And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James.

³⁸When they arrived at the house, Jesus saw a great commotion, with people weeping and wailing loudly. ³⁹Jesus entered and said to them, “Why all this commotion and weeping? The child is not dead, but asleep.”

⁴⁰They laughed at him. So Jesus sent them outside and went with the child’s father and mother and his companions into the room, where the child lay. ⁴¹Taking her by the hand, he said to her, “Talitha kumi!” which means, “Little girl, get up!”

⁴²The girl got up at once and began to walk around. (She was twelve years old.) The parents were amazed, greatly amazed. ⁴³Jesus strictly ordered them not to let anyone know about it, and he told them to give her something to eat.

MARK 4:35—5:43

Read: Jesus calms the storm, exorcises and heals the sick. He reveals his power over evil; the kingdom of God manifests itself. Two miracles intermingle: the healing of a woman with hemorrhage and the resurrection of a young girl.

Reflect: Today, can you contemplate the manifestation of

Jesus' power? How? In the present circumstances, what would it mean for the followers of Jesus to fight against wrong?

Pray: Pray to God so that we can continue with the mission of Jesus to fight against evil and manifest the power of his reign in the world.

Act: Continue Jesus' mission to fight against evil by promoting respect, justice, solidarity, and love among all in his family.

Is he not the carpenter?

(Mt 13:53; Lk 4:16)

6¹Leaving that place, Jesus returned to his own country and his disciples followed him. ²When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue and most of those who heard him were astonished. But they said, "How did this come to him? What kind of wisdom has been given to him, that he also performs such miracles? ³Who is he but the carpenter, the Son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? His sisters, too, are they not here among us?" So they took offense at him.

⁴And Jesus said to them, "Prophets are despised only in their own country, among their relatives and in their own family." ⁵And he could work no miracles there, but only healed a few sick people, by laying his hands on them. ⁶Jesus himself was astounded at their unbelief.

Jesus sends out the Twelve

(Mt 10:1; Lk 9:1; 10:1)

Jesus then went around the villages, teaching. ⁷He called the Twelve to him and began to send them out two by two, giving them authority over evil spirits. ⁸And he ordered them to take nothing for the journey, except a staff: no food, no bag, no money in their belts. ⁹They were to wear sandals and were not to take an extra tunic.

¹⁰And he added, "In whatever house you are welcomed, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹If any place doesn't receive you, and the people refuse to listen to you, leave after shaking the dust off your feet. It will be a testimony against them."

¹²So they set out to proclaim that this was the time to repent. ¹³They drove out many demons and healed many sick people by anointing them.

John the Baptist beheaded

(Mt 14:1; Lk 9:7)

¹⁴King Herod also heard about Jesus, because his name had become well-known. Some people said, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.” ¹⁵Others thought, “He is Elijah,” and others, “He is a prophet like the prophets of times past.” ¹⁶When Herod was told of this, he thought, “I had John beheaded; yet, he has risen from the dead!”

¹⁷For this is what had happened: Herod had ordered John to be arrested; and had had him bound and put in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. Herod had married her; ¹⁸and John had told him, “It is not right for you to live with your brother’s wife.” ¹⁹So Herodias held a grudge against John and wanted to kill him; but she could not, ²⁰because Herod respected John. He knew John to be an upright and holy man and kept him safe. And he liked listening to him although he became very disturbed whenever he heard him.

²¹Herodias had her chance on Herod’s birthday when he gave a dinner for all the senior government officials, military chiefs and the leaders of Galilee. ²²On that occasion, the daughter of Herodias came in and danced; and she delighted Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, “Ask me for anything you want and I will give it to you.” ²³And he went so far as to say with many oaths, “I will give you anything you ask, even half my kingdom.” ²⁴She went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask for?” The mother replied, “The head of John the Baptist.” ²⁵The girl hurried to the king and made her request, “I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist here and now, on a dish.”

²⁶The king was very displeased, but he would not refuse in front of his guests because of his oaths. ²⁷So he sent one of the bodyguards with orders to bring John’s head. He went and beheaded John in prison; ²⁸then he brought the head on a dish and gave it to the girl. And the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹When John’s disciples heard of this, they came and took his body and buried it.

MARK 6:1-29

Read: Jesus teaches in his hometown and his own people reject him. He sends the Twelve to continue his mission. Herod

kills John the Baptist. The disciples return and, together with Jesus, withdraw from the crowds to rest.

Reflect: Can you recognize the voice of God in that person who corrects you of some error? Would he assume the role of a prophet in his community?

Pray: Pray that our leaders and governors will be moved by the right thing and not by public acceptance or personal gain.

Act: Try to act always moved by the right thing rather than by peer pressure.

Jesus, shepherd, and prophet

³⁰The apostles returned and reported to Jesus all they had done and taught. ³¹Then he said to them, “Let us go off by ourselves into a remote place and have some rest.” For there were so many people coming and going that the apostles had no time even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a secluded area by themselves.

³³But people saw them leaving, and many could guess where they were going. So, from all the towns they hurried there on foot, arriving ahead of them.

³⁴As Jesus went ashore, he saw a large crowd, and he had compassion on them for they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.

The first miracle of the loaves

(Mt 14:13; Lk 9:10; Jn 6:1)

³⁵It was now getting late, so his disciples came to him and said, “This is a lonely place and it is now late. ³⁶You should send the people away and let them go to the farms and villages around here, to buy themselves something to eat.”

³⁷Jesus replied, “You, yourselves, give them something to eat.” They answered, “If we are to feed them, we need two hundred silver coins to go and buy enough bread.” ³⁸But Jesus said, “You have some loaves; how many? Go and see.” The disciples found out and said, “There are five loaves and two fish.”

³⁹Then he told them to have the people sit down, together in groups, on the green grass. ⁴⁰This they did, in groups of hundreds and fifties.

⁴¹And Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish and, raising his eyes to heaven, he pronounced a blessing, broke the loaves and handed them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them.

⁴²They all ate and everyone had enough. ⁴³The disciples gathered up what was left, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴Five thousand men had eaten there.

Jesus walks on the water

(Mt 14:22; Jn 6:16)

⁴⁵Immediately, Jesus obliged his disciples to get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, toward Bethsaida, while he himself sent the crowd away. ⁴⁶And having sent the people off, he went by himself to the hillside to pray.

⁴⁷When evening came, the boat was far out on the lake while he was alone on the land. ⁴⁸Jesus saw his disciples straining at the oars for the wind was against them, and before daybreak, he came to them walking on the lake, and he was going to pass them by.

⁴⁹When they saw him walking on the lake, they thought it was a ghost and cried out; ⁵⁰for they all saw him and were terrified. But, at once, he called to them, "Courage! It is I; don't be afraid!" ⁵¹Then Jesus got into the boat with them and the wind died down. They were completely astonished, ⁵²for they had not really grasped the fact of the loaves; their minds were dull.

⁵³Having crossed the lake, they came ashore at Gennesaret where they tied up the boat. ⁵⁴As soon as they landed, people recognized Jesus ⁵⁵and ran to spread the news throughout the countryside. Wherever he was, they brought to him the sick lying on their mats; ⁵⁶and wherever he went, to villages, towns or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplace and begged him to let them touch just the fringe of his cloak. And all who touched him were cured.

True cleanness

(Mt 15:10; Lk 6:39)

7¹One day, the Pharisees gathered around Jesus, and with them were some teachers of the law who had just come from Jerusalem.

²They noticed that some of his disciples were eating their meal with unclean hands, that is, without washing them. ³Now the Pharisees, and

in fact, all the Jews, never eat without washing their hands, for they follow the tradition received from their ancestors. ⁴Nor do they eat anything when they come from the market without first sprinkling themselves. And there are many other traditions they observe; for example, the ritual washing of cups, pots, and plates.

⁵So the Pharisees and the teachers of the law asked him, “Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders, but eat with unclean hands?”

⁶Jesus answered, “You shallow people! How well Isaiah prophesied of you when he wrote: *This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.* ⁷*The worship they offer me is worthless, for what they teach are only human rules.* ⁸You even put aside the commandment of God to hold fast to human tradition.”

⁹And Jesus commented, “You have a fine way of disregarding the commandments of God in order to enforce your own traditions! ¹⁰For example, Moses said: *Do your duty to your father and your mother, and: Whoever curses his father or his mother is to be put to death.* ¹¹But according to you, someone could say to his father or mother, ‘I already declared Corban (which means “offered to God”) what you could have expected from me.’ ¹²In this case, you no longer require him to do anything for his father or mother; ¹³and so you nullify the word of God through the tradition you have handed on. And you do many other things like that.”

¹⁴Jesus then called the people to him again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and try to understand. ¹⁵Nothing that enters a person from the outside can make that person unclean. It is what comes from within that makes a person unclean. ¹⁶Let everyone who has ears listen.”

¹⁷When Jesus got home and was away from the crowd, his disciples asked him about this saying ¹⁸and he replied, “So even you are dull? Do you not see that whatever comes from outside cannot make a person unclean, ¹⁹since it enters not the heart but the stomach and is finally passed out?”

Thus Jesus declared that all foods are clean.

²⁰And he went on, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him, ²¹for evil designs come out of the heart: theft, murder, ²²adultery, jealousy, greed, maliciousness, deceit, indecency, slander, pride, and folly. ²³All these evil things come from within and make a person unclean.”

MARK 6:30—7:23

Read: Jesus feeds five thousand people, walks on water and continues to reveal his power over evil. New controversy with the Pharisees and lawyers, this time about the observance of tradition and the true purity.

Reflect: For our current circumstances, what does all this suggest? Is it possible to repeat the multiplication of the loaves again? Are we able to trust Jesus, even in the midst of doubts? Do our acts of faith spring from the heart, or are they limited to mere compliance with standards?

Pray: Pray that no human being will lack food and that world leaders and other leaders will seriously commit themselves to it. Pray also that your faith in Jesus will increase each day and be manifested in a coherent way in your daily life.

Act: As far as possible, commit yourself to some social justice action that takes place in your parish.

The faith of the Syrophenician

(Mt 15:21)

²⁴When Jesus left that place, he went to the border of the Tyrian country. There, he entered a house, and did not want anyone to know he was there; but he could not remain hidden. ²⁵A woman, whose small daughter had an evil spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet. ²⁶Now this woman was a pagan, a Syrophenician by birth, and she begged him to drive the demon out of her daughter.

²⁷Jesus told her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the puppies." ²⁸But she replied, "Sir, even the puppies under the table eat the crumbs from the children's bread." ²⁹Then Jesus said to her, "You may go your way; because of such a response, the demon has gone out of your daughter." ³⁰And when the woman went home, she found her child lying in bed, and the demon gone.

Healing a deaf and dumb man

³¹Again, Jesus set out; from the country of Tyre he passed through Sidon and, skirting the sea of Galilee, he came to the territory of

Decapolis. ³²There, a deaf man, who also had difficulty in speaking, was brought to him. They asked Jesus to lay his hand upon him.

³³Jesus took him apart from the crowd, put his fingers into the man's ears and touched his tongue with spittle. ³⁴Then, looking up to heaven, he said with a deep sigh, "Ephphata!" that is, "Be opened!"

³⁵And immediately, his ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he began to speak clearly. ³⁶Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone about it; but the more he insisted, the more they proclaimed it. ³⁷The people were completely astonished and said, "He has done all things well; he makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak."

The second miracle of the loaves

(Mt 15:32)

8¹ Soon afterward, Jesus was in the midst of another large crowd that obviously had nothing to eat. So he called his disciples and said to them, ²"I feel sorry for these people because they have been with me for three days and now have nothing to eat. ³If I send them to their homes hungry, they will faint on the way; some of them have come a long way."

⁴His disciples replied, "Where, in a deserted place like this, could we get enough bread to feed these people?" ⁵He asked them, "How many loaves have you?" And they answered, "Seven."

⁶Then he ordered the crowd to sit down on the ground. Taking the seven loaves and giving thanks, he broke them and handed them to his disciples to distribute. And they distributed them among the people. ⁷They also had some small fish. So Jesus said a blessing and asked that these be shared as well.

⁸The people ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. ⁹Now those who had eaten were about four thousand in number. Jesus sent them away ¹⁰and immediately got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

Why do they demand a sign?

(Mt 16:1; Lk 12:54)

¹¹The Pharisees came and started to argue with Jesus. Hoping to embarrass him, they asked for some heavenly sign. ¹²Then his spirit was moved. He gave a deep sigh and said, "Why do the people of this present

time ask for a sign? Truly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this people.”¹³ Then he left them, got into the boat again and went to the other side of the lake.

¹⁴The disciples had forgotten to bring more bread and had only one loaf with them in the boat. ¹⁵Then Jesus warned them, “Keep your eyes open and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod.”
¹⁶And they said to one another, “He saw that we have no bread.”

¹⁷Aware of this, Jesus asked them, “Why are you talking about the loaves you are short of? Do you not see or understand? Are your minds closed?”
¹⁸Have you eyes that don’t see and ears that don’t hear? And do you not remember ¹⁹when I broke the five loaves among five thousand? How many baskets full of leftovers did you collect?” They answered, “Twelve.”
²⁰“And having distributed seven loaves to the four thousand, how many wicker baskets of leftovers did you collect?” They answered, “Seven.”
²¹Then Jesus said to them, “Do you still not understand?”

MARK 7:24—8:21

Read: Jesus exorcises the daughter of a Siro-Phoenician woman. He heals a deaf mute. Gives food to four thousand people. The Pharisees ask him for a sign from heaven, but he refuses to give it. He rebukes his disciples because they do not understand his actions.

Reflect: There are still those who ask for signs from heaven to believe, are you one of them? Why do you think healing and sharing bread are so prominent in this Gospel? Does the Church continue with this ministry? And you?

Pray: Ask God for the grace of being able to recognize Him in all that surrounds you, and to continue the saving work of Jesus.

Act: Share your bread, your food, invite someone who is hungry or who eats alone to eat with you. May our good works be signs of the presence of God.

Cure of the blind man at Bethsaida

²²When they came to Bethsaida, Jesus was asked to touch a blind man who was brought to him. ²³He took the blind man by the hand and

led him outside the village. When he had put spittle on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, he asked, "Can you see anything?" ²⁴The man, who was beginning to see, replied, "I see people! They look like trees, but they move around." ²⁵Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again and the man could see perfectly. His sight was restored and he could see everything clearly.

²⁶Then Jesus sent him home, saying, "Do not return to the village."

Peter's profession of faith

(Mt 16:13; Lk 9:18; Jn 6:69)

²⁷Jesus set out with his disciples for the villages around Caesarea Philippi; and on the way, he asked them, "Who do people say I am?" ²⁸And they told him, "Some say, you are John the Baptist; others say, you are Elijah or one of the prophets."

Then Jesus asked them, ²⁹"But you, who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah." ³⁰And he ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

³¹Jesus then began to teach them that the Son of Man had to suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law. He would be killed, and after three days rise again. ³²Jesus said all this quite openly so that Peter took him aside and began to protest strongly. ³³But Jesus, turning around, and looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind me, Satan! You are thinking not as God does, but as people do."

Take up your cross

(Mt 16:24; Lk 9:23)

³⁴Then Jesus called the people and his disciples and said, "If you want to follow me, deny yourself; take up your cross and follow me. ³⁵For if you choose to save your life, you will lose it; and if you lose your life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, you will save it.

³⁶What good is it to gain the whole world while destroying your soul? ³⁷There is nothing more precious than your soul. ³⁸I tell you, if anyone is ashamed of me and of my words, among this adulterous and sinful people, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

The transfiguration of Jesus

(Mt 17:1; Lk 9:28)

9 And he went on to say, “Truly I tell you, there are some here who will not die before they see the kingdom of God coming with power.”

MARK 8:22—9:1

Read: Jesus heals a blind man. Peter confesses him as Messiah, but does not understand what the passion is. Jesus, then, talks about the demands of following him.

Reflect: And you, who do you say Jesus is? Are you willing to follow him with all his demands?

Pray: Ask for the grace to confess Jesus as the Messiah and to accept his demands even when they seem difficult.

Act: See the difficulties and problems of daily life as an invitation to “carry the cross of Jesus” and proclaim in your midst that he is the Messiah.

²Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John and led them up a high mountain. There, his appearance was changed before their eyes. ³Even his clothes shone, becoming as white as no bleach of this world could make them. ⁴Elijah and Moses appeared to them; the two were talking with Jesus.

⁵Then Peter spoke and said to Jesus, “Master, it is good that we are here; let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” ⁶For he did not know what to say: they were overcome with awe. ⁷But a cloud formed, covering them in a shadow and from the cloud came a voice, “This is my Son, the Beloved: listen to him!” ⁸And suddenly, as they looked around, they no longer saw anyone except Jesus with them.

⁹As they came down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰So they kept this to themselves, although they discussed with one another what ‘to rise from the dead’ could mean.

The question about Elijah

¹¹Finally, they asked him, “Why, then, do the teachers of the law say

that Elijah must come first?”¹² Jesus answered them, “Of course, Elijah will come first so that everything may be as it should be. But why do the Scriptures say that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be despised?”¹³ I tell you that Elijah has already come; and they have treated him as they pleased, as the Scriptures say of him.”

The boy with an evil spirit

¹⁴When they came to the place where they had left the disciples, they saw many people around them and some teachers of the law arguing with them. ¹⁵When the people saw Jesus, they were astonished and ran to greet him.

¹⁶He asked, “What are you arguing about with them?” ¹⁷A man answered him from the crowd, “Master, I brought my son to you, for he has a spirit, deaf and mute. ¹⁸Whenever the spirit seizes him, it throws him down and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth and becomes stiff all over. I asked your disciples to drive the spirit out, but they could not.”

¹⁹Jesus replied, “You faithless people! How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him to me.” ²⁰And they brought the boy to him.

As soon as the spirit saw Jesus, it shook and convulsed the boy, who fell on the ground and began rolling about, foaming at the mouth. ²¹Then Jesus asked the father, “How long has this been happening to him?” He replied, “From childhood. ²²And it has often thrown him into the fire and into the water to destroy him. If you can do anything, have pity on us and help us.”

²³Jesus said to him, “Why do you say, ‘If you can?’ All things are possible for one who believes.” ²⁴Immediately, the father of the boy cried out, “I do believe, but help the little faith I have.”

²⁵Jesus saw that the crowd was increasing rapidly, so he ordered the evil spirit, “Dumb and deaf spirit, I command you: Leave the boy and never enter him again.” ²⁶The evil spirit shook and convulsed the boy and with a terrible shriek came out. The boy lay like a corpse and people said, “He is dead.” ²⁷But Jesus took him by the hand and raised him, and the boy stood up.

²⁸After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive out the spirit?” ²⁹And he answered, “Only prayer can drive out this kind, nothing else.”

Jesus again speaks of his passion

(Mt 17:22; Lk 9:43)

³⁰After leaving that place, they made their way through Galilee; but Jesus did not want people to know where he was ³¹because he was teaching his disciples. And he told them, “The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, but three days after he has been killed, he will rise.” ³²The disciples, however, did not understand these words and they were afraid to ask him what he meant.

Who is the greatest?

(Mt 18:1; Lk 9:46; 18:17; 22:24)

³³They came to Capernaum and, once inside the house, Jesus asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” ³⁴But they did not answer, because they had been arguing about who was the greatest.

³⁵Then he sat down, called the Twelve and said to them, “If someone wants to be first, let him be last of all and servant of all.” ³⁶Then he took a little child, placed him in their midst, and putting his arms around him, he said to them, ³⁷“Whoever welcomes a child such as this in my name, welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me, welcomes not me, but the One who sent me.”

³⁸John said to him, “Master, we saw someone who drove out demons by calling upon your name, and we tried to forbid him because he does not belong to our group.” ³⁹Jesus answered, “Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in my name can soon after speak evil of me. ⁴⁰For whoever is not against us is for us.

⁴¹If anyone gives you a drink of water because you belong to Christ and bear his name, truly, I say to you, he will not go without reward.

If your eye causes you to sin

(5:13; Mt 18:6; Lk 17:1)

⁴²If anyone should cause one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble and sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a great millstone around his neck.

⁴³If your hand makes you fall into sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a hand than with two hands to go to hell, to the fire that never goes out. ⁴⁵And if your foot makes you fall into sin, cut it off! It is better for you to enter life without a foot than with both feet to be thrown

into hell. ⁴⁷And if your eye makes you fall into sin, tear it out! It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, keeping both eyes, to be thrown into hell, ⁴⁸where the *worms that eat them never die and the fire never goes out*. ⁴⁹The fire itself will preserve them.

⁵⁰Salt is a good thing; but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another.”

MARK 9:2-50

Read: The transfiguration of Jesus: the spiritual shines through the material. Jesus explains to his disciples the need for prayer in the exercise of ministry. He announces again his passion, but the disciples still do not understand, so again he talks about the demands of discipleship.

Reflect: Are you aware of the presence of the spiritual in your daily life? What are you inspired to do? Why do you believe that Jesus must suffer and die? Should a disciple of Jesus always aspire to be the first? What does the image of a child suggest?

Pray: Pray so that you can contemplate God at all times, so that your trust in Him is like that of a child who absolutely trusts his or her parents. Pray also that as disciples of Jesus we aspire always to serve others.

Act: Try this day to contemplate the presence of God in all things, and give thanks by offering your service to others.

Divorce

(5:31; Mt 19:1; Lk 16:18)

10¹ Jesus then left that place and went to the province of Judea, beyond the Jordan River. Once more, crowds gathered around him and, once more, he taught them as he always did. ²Some (Pharisees came and) put him to the test with this question: “Is it right for a husband to divorce his wife?” ³He replied, “What law did Moses give you?” ⁴They answered, “Moses allowed us to write a certificate of dismissal in order to divorce.”

⁵Then Jesus said to them, “Moses wrote this law for you, because you have hearts of stone. ⁶But from the beginning of creation, *God made them male and female;* ⁷*and because of this, man has to leave father*

and mother and be joined to his wife;⁸ and the two shall become one body. So, they are no longer two, but one body.⁹ Therefore, let no one separate what God has joined.”

¹⁰When they were indoors at home, the disciples again asked him about this ¹¹and he told them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against his wife; ¹²and the woman who divorces her husband and marries another, also commits adultery.”

Let the children come to me

(Mt 19:13; Lk 18:15)

¹³People were bringing their little children to him to have him touch them, and the disciples rebuked them for this.

¹⁴When Jesus noticed it, he was very angry and said, “Let the children come to me and don’t stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. ¹⁵Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it.” ¹⁶Then he took the children in his arms and, laying his hands on them, blessed them.

Jesus and the rich man

(Mt 19:16; Lk 18:18)

¹⁷Just as Jesus was setting out on his journey again, a man ran up, knelt before him and asked, “Good Master, what must I do to have eternal life?”

¹⁸Jesus answered, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments: Do not kill; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not bear false witness; do not cheat; honor your father and mother.” ²⁰The man replied, “I have obeyed all these commandments since my childhood.”

²¹Then Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him; and he said, “For you, one thing is lacking. Go, sell what you have and give the money to the poor; and you will have riches in heaven. Then, come, and follow me.” ²²On hearing these words, his face fell and he went away sorrowful, for he was a man of great wealth.

How hard for the rich to discover the kingdom!

²³Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” ²⁴The disciples were shocked at these words, but Jesus insisted, “Children, how hard it

is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of the needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁶They were more astonished than ever and wondered, “Who, then, can be saved?” ²⁷Jesus looked steadily at them and said, “For human beings, it is impossible, but not for God; all things are possible with God.”

The reward for those who follow Jesus

(Mt 19:27; Lk 18:28)

²⁸Peter spoke up and said, “We have given up everything to follow you.” ²⁹Jesus answered, “Truly, there is no one who has left house, or brothers or sisters, or father or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, ³⁰who will not receive his reward. I say to you: even in the midst of persecution, he will receive a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and lands in the present time; and, in the world to come, eternal life. ³¹Do pay attention: many who now are the first will be last, and the last, first.”

MARK 10:1-31

Read: Jesus takes a position on the divorce practices of his day. He blesses some children. He is saddened by the choice of the man who desists to follow him by clinging to his riches, and talks about the reward that awaits his followers.

Reflect: What is your position on divorce? Have you left anything to follow Jesus? What do you think is the greatest reward that awaits you to follow him?

Pray: Pray to God for the matrimonial vocation, that married people reveal in their daily life the teaching of the Gospel. Pray also so that Christians always aspire to the kingdom and its justice rather than material goods.

Act: Live your vocation with generosity and detachment from material things.

³²They were on the road going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead. The Twelve were anxious, and those who followed were afraid. Once more Jesus took the Twelve aside to tell them what was to

happen to him. ³³“You see we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be given over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and hand him over to the foreigners ³⁴who will make fun of him, spit on him, scourge him, and kill him; but three days later he will rise.”

James and John ask for the first places

(Mt 20:20; Lk 22:24)

³⁵James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and said to him, “Master, we want you to grant us what we are going to ask of you.” ³⁶And he said, “What do you want me to do for you?” ³⁷They answered, “Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left when you come in your glory.”

³⁸But Jesus said to them, “You don’t know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized in the way I am baptized?” ³⁹They answered, “We can.” And Jesus told them, “The cup that I drink, you will drink; and you will be baptized in the way that I am baptized; ⁴⁰but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant. It has been prepared for others.”

⁴¹On hearing this, the other ten were angry with James and John. ⁴²Jesus then called them to him and said, “As you know, the so-called rulers of the nations behave like tyrants and those in authority oppress the people. ⁴³But it shall not be so among you; whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever would be first among you shall make himself slave of all. ⁴⁵Think of the Son of Man who has not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life to redeem many.”

The blind man of Jericho

(Mt 20:29; Lk 18:35)

⁴⁶They came to Jericho. As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar, Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth passing by, he began to call out, “Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸Many people scolded him and told him to keep quiet, but he shouted all the louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

⁴⁹Jesus, stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called the blind man, saying, “Take heart! Get up, he is calling you!” ⁵⁰He immediately threw aside his cloak, jumped up and went to Jesus.

⁵¹Then Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said, “Master, let me see again!” ⁵²And Jesus said to him, “Go your way, your faith has made you well.” And, immediately, he could see, and he followed Jesus along the road.

MARK 10:32-52

Read: For the third time Jesus predicts his passion. The disciples still do not understand his teaching, and James and John ask for the first place. Jesus emphasizes that discipleship is about service to others. Finally, Jesus returns the sight to Bartimaeus.

Reflect: Why do you think the disciples do not understand the teachings of Jesus? What does the following expression suggest to you: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many”?

Pray: Ask God for the necessary strength to live the teachings of the Gospel with an attitude of service and dedication to others.

Act: Make a special gesture of service to each of your own. Do it as if it were the last thing you could do for them.

The triumphant entry into Jerusalem

(Mt 21:1; Lk 19:28; Jn 12:12)

11 ¹When they drew near to Jerusalem and arrived at Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples with these instructions, ²“Go to the village ahead of you and, as you enter it, you will find there a colt tied up that no one has ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³If anyone says to you, ‘What are you doing?’ give this answer, ‘The Lord needs it, but he will send it back immediately.’”

⁴They went off and found the colt, out in the street, tied at the door. ⁵As they were untying it, some of the bystanders asked, “Why are you untying that colt?” ⁶They answered as Jesus had told them, and the people allowed them to continue.

⁷They brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks on its back, and Jesus sat upon it. ⁸Many people also spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread leafy branches from the fields. ⁹Then the people

who walked ahead, and those who followed behind Jesus, began to shout, “Hosannah! *Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!* ¹⁰Blessed is the kingdom of our father David, which comes! Hosannah in the highest!”

¹¹So Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple. And after he had looked all around, as it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

Jesus curses the barren fig tree

(Mt 21:18; Lk 13:6)

¹²The next day, when they were leaving Bethany, he felt hungry. ¹³In the distance, he noticed a fig tree covered with leaves; so he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. ¹⁴Then Jesus said to the fig tree, “May no one ever eat your fruit!” And his disciples heard these words.

Jesus clears the temple

(Mt 21:10; Lk 19:45; Jn 2:14)

¹⁵When they reached Jerusalem, Jesus went to the temple and began to drive away all the people he saw buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the stools of those who sold pigeons. ¹⁶And he would not let anyone carry anything through the temple area.

¹⁷Jesus then taught the people, “Does not God say in the Scriptures: *My house will be called a House of Prayer for all the nations?* But you have turned it into a den of thieves.”

¹⁸The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard of this, and they tried to find a way to destroy him. They were afraid of him because all the people were astonished by his teaching.

¹⁹When evening came, Jesus left the city.

The power of faith

(Mt 21:20)

²⁰Early the next morning, as they walked along the road, the disciples saw the fig tree withered to its roots. ²¹Peter then said to him, “Master, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered.”

²²And Jesus replied, “Have faith in God. ²³Truly, I say to you, if you say to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and have no

doubt in your heart, but believe that what you say will happen, it will be done for you. ²⁴Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it and it shall be done for you. ²⁵And when you stand to pray, if you have anything against anyone, forgive, ²⁶so that your heavenly Father may also forgive your sins.”

By what authority do you act?

(Mt 21:23; Lk 20:1)

²⁷They were once again in Jerusalem. As Jesus was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders came to him ²⁸and asked, “What authority do you have to act like this? Who gave you the authority to do the things you do?”

²⁹Jesus said to them, “I will ask you a question, only one, and if you give me an answer, then I will tell you what authority I have to act like this. ³⁰Was John’s baptism of heavenly or human origin? Answer me.”

³¹And they kept arguing among themselves, “If we answer that it was a work of God, he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’” ³²But neither could they answer before the people that the baptism of John was merely something human, for everyone regarded John as a prophet. ³³So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know,” and Jesus said to them, “Neither will I tell you what authority I have to act as I do.”

MARK 11:1-33

Read: Jesus enters triumphantly into Jerusalem. He curses a fig tree and it dies. He expels merchants from the temple. And the religious leaders of Jerusalem complain about the authority of his actions.

Reflect: What does the event of the fig tree suggest? Is not it out of place? Are our temples houses of prayer? If they were not, what would you do?

Pray: Pray that you may contemplate and venerate the presence of God everywhere, especially in those who suffer and are marginalized.

Act: Treat those around you as if they were living temples of God, with respect, dignity and veneration.

Parable of the tenants

(Mt 21:33; Lk 20:9)

12¹Using parables, Jesus went on to say, “A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a hole for the winepress and built a watchtower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenants and went abroad.

²In due time, he sent a servant to receive from the tenants the fruit of the vineyard. ³But they seized the servant, struck him and sent him back empty-handed. ⁴Again, the man sent another servant. They also struck him on the head and treated him shamefully. ⁵He sent another and they killed him. In the same way, they treated many others: some they beat up and others they killed. ⁶One was still left, his beloved son. And so, last of all, he sent him to the tenants, for he said, ‘They will respect my son.’

⁷But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the one who is to inherit the vineyard. Let’s kill him and the property will be ours.’ ⁸So they seized him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard. ⁹Now, what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others.”

¹⁰And Jesus added, “Have you not read this text of the Scriptures: *The stone which the builders rejected has become the keystone*; ¹¹*this is the Lord’s doing, and we marvel at it?*”

¹²They wanted to arrest him, for they realized that Jesus meant this parable for them, but they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

Paying taxes to Caesar

(Mt 22:15; Lk 20:20)

¹³They sent to Jesus some Pharisees with members of Herod’s party, with the purpose of trapping him by his own words. ¹⁴They came and said to Jesus, “Master, we know that you are truthful; you are not influenced by anyone, and your answers do not vary according to who is listening to you, but you truly teach God’s way. Tell us, is it against the law to pay taxes to Caesar? Should we pay them or not?”

¹⁵But Jesus saw through their trick and answered, “Why are you testing me? Bring me a silver coin and let me see it.” ¹⁶They brought him one and Jesus asked, “Whose image is this and whose name?” They

answered, “Caesar’s.” ¹⁷Then Jesus said, “Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.”

And they were greatly astonished.

The resurrection

(Mt 22:23; Lk 20:27)

¹⁸The Sadducees also came to Jesus. Since they claim that there is no resurrection, they questioned him in this way, ¹⁹“Master, in the Scriptures, Moses gave us this law: If anyone dies and leaves a wife but no children, his brother must take the woman and, with her, have a baby who will be considered the child of his deceased brother. ²⁰Now, there were seven brothers. The first married a wife, but he died without leaving any children. ²¹The second took the wife, and he also died, leaving no children. The same thing happened to the third. ²²In fact, all seven brothers died, leaving no children. Last of all, the woman died. ²³Now, in the resurrection, to which of them will she be wife? For all seven brothers had her as wife.”

²⁴Jesus replied, “Is this not the reason you are mistaken, that you do not understand the Scriptures or the power of God? ²⁵When they rise from the dead, men and women do not marry, but are like the angels in heaven.

²⁶Now, about the resurrection of the dead, have you never had thoughts about the burning bush in the book of Moses? God said to Moses: *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.* ²⁷He is the God, not of the dead, but of the living. You are totally wrong.”

MARK 12:1-27

Read: With the parable of the evil vinedressers, Jesus summarizes the activity of the religious leaders. The Pharisees and the Herodians set a trap by raising the issue of the tribute to the empire, but Jesus eludes it. The Sadducees, on the other hand, raise the theme of the resurrection of the dead, and Jesus clarifies that God is a God of the living, not of the dead.

Reflect: What do you think about the activity of our religious leaders? Should the Church interfere in matters of the State? Do you really expect the resurrection of the dead?

Pray: Pray for the leaders of the Church and for those who govern the country, so that they may be faithful to the mission they have received. Pray also that your faith will grow day by day and always wait in hope for the resurrection of the dead.

Act: Find out about the activities your local diocese is carrying out to promote life, peace, respect and justice in society.

The greatest commandment

(Mt 22:34; Lk 10:25; 20:40)

²⁸A teacher of the law had been listening to this discussion and admired how Jesus answered them. So he came up and asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?”

²⁹Jesus answered, “The first is: *Hear, Israel! The Lord, our God, is One Lord;* ³⁰*and you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.* ³¹And after this comes a second commandment: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* There is no commandment greater than these two.”

³²The teacher of the law said to him, “Well spoken, Master; you are right when you say that he is one and there is no other besides him. ³³To love him with all our heart, with all our understanding and with all our strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves is more important than any burnt offering or sacrifice.”

³⁴Jesus approved this answer and said, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Whose Son is the Christ?

(Mt 22:41; Lk 20:41; Mt 23:6)

³⁵As Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, “The teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the Son of David. How can that be? ³⁶For David himself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, declared: The Lord said to my Lord, ‘*Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet!*’ ³⁷If David himself calls him Lord, in what way can he be his Son?”

Many people came to Jesus and listened to him gladly.

³⁸As he was teaching, he also said to them, “Beware of those teachers of the law who enjoy walking around in long robes and being greeted in

the marketplace; ³⁹and who like to occupy reserved seats in the synagogues; and the first places at feasts. ⁴⁰They even devour the widow's and the orphan's goods while making a show of long prayers. How severe a sentence they will receive!"

The widow's offering

(Lk 21:1)

⁴¹Jesus sat down opposite the temple treasury and watched the people dropping money into the treasury box and many rich people put in large offerings. ⁴²But a poor widow also came and dropped in two small coins.

⁴³Then Jesus called his disciples and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all those who gave offerings. ⁴⁴For all of them gave from their plenty; but she gave from her poverty and put in everything she had, her very living."

MARK 12:28-44

Read: Jesus defines the main point of the Law: love of God and neighbor. He questions the interpretation of the Scripture that deals with the Messiah and David. He warns about those who use religion for their own purpose and praises the generosity of a widow.

Reflect: Do you consider that there is a close relationship between love for God and neighbor? Why? Do you confess that Jesus is the Messiah? Why? Do you know people who use religion for their own benefit? Are you generous as the poor widow?

Pray: Ask God for the grace of being able to love him by loving others, and of confessing Jesus as Messiah by doing what he did.

Act: Share what you consider valuable (money, time, friendship, etc.) with someone in need.

Jesus speaks of the end

(Mt 24:1; Lk 21:5; 19:41; 17:23)

13¹ As Jesus left the temple, one of his disciples said, "Look, Master, at the enormous stones and wonderful buildings here!" ²And Jesus answered, "You see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another, but all will be torn down."

³After a while, when Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives facing the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew approached him privately and asked, ⁴“Tell us when this will be. What sign will be given us before all this happens?”

⁵Then Jesus began to tell them, “Don’t let anyone mislead you. ⁶Many will come in my name saying, ‘I am he,’ and they will deceive many people.

⁷When you hear of wars and threats of war, don’t be troubled; this must occur, but the end is not yet. ⁸Nation will fight nation and kingdom will oppose kingdom. There will be earthquakes everywhere and famines, too. And these will be like the first pains of childbirth. ⁹Be on your guard, for you will be arrested and taken to court. You will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. ¹⁰For the preaching of the gospel to all nations has to come first.

¹¹So, when you are arrested and brought to trial, don’t worry about what you are to say; for you shall say what will be given to you in that hour. It is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit.

¹²Brother will betray brother even to death, and the father his child. Children will turn against their parents and have them put to death. ¹³You will be hated by all for my name’s sake, but whoever holds out to the end will be saved.

Last days of Jerusalem

¹⁴So, when you see the desolating abomination set in the place where it should not be (may the reader understand!), then let those in Judea flee to the mountains. ¹⁵If you are on the housetop, don’t come down to take anything with you. ¹⁶If you are in the field, don’t turn back to fetch your cloak. ¹⁷How hard it will be then for pregnant women and mothers with babies at the breast! ¹⁸Pray that it may not happen in winter. ¹⁹For this will be a time of distress, such as was never known from the beginning, when God created the world, until now; and is never to be known again. ²⁰So that, if the Lord had not shortened that time, no one would survive; but he decided to shorten it for the sake of those whom he has chosen.

²¹And if anyone says to you at that time, ‘Look, here is the Messiah! Look, he is there!’—do not believe it. ²²For false messiahs and false

prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders in order to deceive even God's chosen people, if that were possible. ²³Be on your guard then; I have told you everything ahead of time.

The coming of the Son of Man

(Mt 24:29; Lk 21:25)

²⁴Later on in those days, after that disastrous time, *the sun will grow dark, the moon will not give its light, ²⁵the stars will fall out of the sky, and the whole universe will be shaken.* ²⁶Then people will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. ²⁷And he will send the angels to gather his chosen people from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the sky.

²⁸Learn a lesson from the fig tree: as soon as its branches become tender and it begins to sprout leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹In the same way, when you see these things happening, know that the time is near, even at the door. ³⁰Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all this has happened. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²But, regarding that day and that hour, no one knows when it will come, not even the angels, not even the Son, but only the Father.

³³Be alert and watch, for you don't know when the time will come. ³⁴When a man goes abroad and leaves his home, he puts his servants in charge, giving to each one some responsibility; and he orders the doorkeeper to stay awake. ³⁵So stay awake for you don't know when the Lord of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, when the cock crows or before dawn. ³⁶If he comes suddenly do not let him catch you asleep.

³⁷And what I say to you, I say to all: Stay awake!"

MARK 13:1-37

Read: Chapter thirteen develops the eschatological discourse (about the last days) of Jesus. With apocalyptic language he invites the disciples to be prepared, attentive, at the arrival of the Messiah.

Reflect: Do you consider that we are living in times worse than before? How should we prepare for the coming of the Lord?

Pray: Ask the Lord for perseverance and strength to live the Gospel message, work for the kingdom and its justice, and always be ready to meet the Lord.

Act: Make a list of those things you think you should do before your final encounter with the Lord. Try to make them this day.

Conspiracy against Jesus

(Mt 26:2; Lk 22:1; Jn 11:47)

1¹It was now two days before the feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for a way to arrest Jesus on a false charge and put him to death; ²but they said, “Not during the Festival, for there might be trouble among the people.”

Jesus anointed at Bethany

(Mt 26:6; Jn 12:1)

³Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper. As he was reclining at dinner, a woman entered carrying an alabaster jar of expensive perfume made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfumed oil on Jesus’ head. ⁴Then some of them became angry and said, “What a useless waste of perfume. ⁵It could have been sold for more than three hundred silver coins and the money given to the poor.” And they criticized her.

⁶But Jesus said, “Let her alone; why are you troubling her? What she has just done for me is a very charitable work. ⁷At any time you can help the poor, for you always have them with you; but you will not have me forever. ⁸This woman did what she had to do: she anointed my body for burial before I die. ⁹Truly, I say to you, wherever the Good News is proclaimed, and this will be throughout the world, what she has done will be told in praise of her.”

¹⁰Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went off to the chief priests in order to betray Jesus to them. ¹¹On hearing him, they were excited and promised to give him money. So Judas started planning the best way to hand Jesus over to them.

The Lord's Supper

(Mt 26:17; Lk 22:7; 1 Cor 11:23; Jn 13)

¹²On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the day when the Passover Lamb was killed, the disciples asked him, "Where would you have us go to prepare the Passover meal for you?"

¹³So Jesus sent two of his disciples with these instructions, "Go into the city, and there, a man will come to you carrying a jar of water. Follow him to the house he enters and say to the owner, ¹⁴'The Master says, "Where is the room where I may eat the Passover meal with my disciples?"' ¹⁵Then he will show you a large room upstairs, already arranged and furnished. There, you will prepare for us." ¹⁶The disciples went off. When they reached the city they found everything just as Jesus had told them and they prepared the Passover meal.

¹⁷When it was evening, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. ¹⁸While they were at table eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me, *one who shares my meal.*" ¹⁹They were deeply distressed at hearing this and asked him, one after the other, "You don't mean me, do you?" ²⁰And Jesus answered, "It is one of you Twelve, one who dips his bread in the dish with me. ²¹The Son of Man is going as the Scriptures say he will. But alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed; better for him if he had never been born."

²²While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to them. And he said, "Take this. It is my body." ²³Then he took a cup; and after he had given thanks, he passed it to them and they all drank from it. ²⁴And he said, "This is my blood, the blood of the Covenant poured out for many. ²⁵Truly, I say to you, I will not taste the fruit of the vine again, until that day when I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God."

Peter's denial foretold

(Mt 26:30; Lk 22:34; Jn 13:37)

²⁶After singing psalms of praise, they went out to the Mount of Olives. ²⁷And Jesus said to them, "All of you will be dismayed and fall away; for the Scripture says: *I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.* ²⁸But after I am raised, I will go to Galilee ahead of you."

²⁹Then Peter said to him, "Even though all the others fall away, I will not." ³⁰And Jesus replied, "Truly I say to you, today, this very night,

before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.”³¹ But Peter insisted, “Though I have to die with you, I will never deny you.” And all of them said the same.

MARK 14:1-31

Read: Jesus’ adversaries seek him out to kill him. Jesus is aware of the proximity of his death, he lets himself be anointed with oil, he celebrates his last supper: he institutes the Eucharist, announces the betrayal of one of their own and the abandonment of all.

Reflect: Are you willing to be Eucharist for others as Jesus was? Do you consider yourself prepared to follow Jesus to the ultimate consequences?

Pray: Pray that the Christian life will always be Eucharist for others: donation, self-giving, service. Pray also that we will not be tempted to trust more in our strength than in the presence of our Lord.

Act: Visit Jesus in the sacrament of the altar; offer your wishes, concerns and fears there.

Gethsemane

(Lk 22:40; Jn 18:1)

³²They came to a place, which is called Gethsemane; and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”

³³But he took Peter, James, and John along with him, and, becoming filled with fear and distress, ³⁴he said to them, “My soul is full of sorrow, even to death. Remain here and stay awake.”

³⁵Then he went a little further on and fell to the ground, praying that, if possible, this hour might pass him by. Jesus said, ³⁶“Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me. Yet, not what I want, but what you want.”

³⁷Then he came and found them asleep; and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn’t you stay awake for one hour? ³⁸Stay awake and pray, all of you, so that you may not slip into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the body is weak.” ³⁹And, going away, he prayed saying the same words. ⁴⁰When he came back to the disciples, he found

them asleep again. They could not keep their eyes open and they did not know what to say to him.

⁴¹When he came back the third time, he said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is all over, the time has come: the Son of Man is now given into the hands of sinners. ⁴²Get up, let us go! Look: the one who betrays me is approaching.”

The arrest

(Mt 26:47; Lk 22:47; Jn 18:2)

⁴³While Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came up. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, who had been sent by the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders. ⁴⁴The traitor had arranged a signal for them, “The one I kiss, he is the man. Arrest him and take him away under guard.”

⁴⁵So, when he came, he went directly to Jesus, and said, “Master! Master!” and kissed him. ⁴⁶Then they seized Jesus and arrested him. ⁴⁷One of the bystanders drew his sword and struck out at the High Priest’s servant, cutting off his ear.

⁴⁸Jesus turned to them and said, “So, you have set out against a robber! Did you need swords and clubs to arrest me? ⁴⁹Day after day, I was among you, teaching in the temple, and you did not arrest me. But let the Scriptures be fulfilled.” ⁵⁰Then they all deserted him and fled.

⁵¹A young man, covered by nothing but a linen cloth, followed Jesus. When they took hold of him, ⁵²he left the cloth in their hands and fled away naked.

⁵³They led Jesus to the High Priest, and all the chief priests assembled with the elders and the teachers of the law. ⁵⁴Peter had followed him at a distance; and went right into the courtyard of the High Priest, where he sat with the guards, warming himself at the fire.

⁵⁵Now the chief priests and the whole Council tried to find some evidence against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they were unable to find anything. ⁵⁶Even though many came up to speak falsely against him, their evidence did not agree. ⁵⁷At last, some stood up and gave this false witness: ⁵⁸“We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made by human hands, and in three days I will build another not made by human hands.’” ⁵⁹But even so, their evidence did not agree.

⁶⁰The High Priest then stood up in the midst of them and asked Jesus, “Have you no answer at all? What about this evidence against you?”
⁶¹But Jesus was silent and made no reply.

The High Priest put a second question to him, “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” ⁶²Then Jesus answered, “I am, and you will see *the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Most Powerful, and coming with the clouds of heaven around him.*” ⁶³Then the High Priest, tearing his garments to show his horror, said, “What more evidence do we need? ⁶⁴You have just heard his blasphemous words. What is your decision?” They all condemned Jesus, saying, “He must die.”

⁶⁵Some of them began to spit on Jesus; and, blindfolding him, they struck him and said, “Play the prophet!” And the guards set upon him with blows.

Peter disowns Jesus

(Mt 26:69; Jn 18:15)

⁶⁶While Peter was below in the courtyard, a servant-girl of the High Priest came by. ⁶⁷Noticing Peter beside the fire, she looked straight at him and said, “You also were with Jesus, the Nazarene.” ⁶⁸But he denied it, “I don’t know or understand what you are talking about.” And he went out through the gateway and a cock crowed.

⁶⁹The servant-girl saw him there and told the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” ⁷⁰But Peter denied it again. After a little while, those standing nearby said to Peter, “Of course you are one of them; you are a Galilean, aren’t you?” ⁷¹And Peter began to justify himself with curses and oaths, “I don’t know the man you are talking about.”

⁷²Just then a cock crowed a second time and Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

MARK 14:32-72

Read: Jesus prays in Gethsemane—he knows that his hour is near—while the most intimate of his disciples sleep. He is arrested and taken to court. There are many who accuse him but their testimonies do not match. He proclaims himself the Son of God and therefore is condemned to death. Peter denies any link with his Master.

Reflect: Why do you think Jesus' adversaries were looking for his death? Are you listening for the Lord's call, or do you sleep like the disciples? Being in Peter's place, what would you have done?

Pray: Ask for grace so that you can proclaim at all times that you are a disciple of Jesus, not only with words but, above all, with your way of life. Also ask for forgiveness if you think you have ever denied him.

Act: Share with someone what it means for you to be a disciple of Jesus. Do not be afraid to talk about your faith.

Jesus before Pilate

(Mt 27:11; Lk 23:2; Jn 18:28)

15¹Early in the morning, the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law (that is, the whole Council or Sanhedrin) had their plan ready. They put Jesus in chains, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

²Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "You say so."³ As the chief priests accused Jesus of many things, ⁴Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer at all? See how many charges they bring against you."⁵ But Jesus gave no further answers, much to Pilate's surprise.

⁶At every Passover festival, Pilate used to free any prisoner the people asked for. ⁷Now there was a man called Barabbas, jailed with the rioters who had committed murder in the uprising. ⁸When the crowd went up to ask Pilate the usual favor, ⁹he said to them, "Do you want me to set free the King of the Jews?" ¹⁰for he realized that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him out of envy. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask instead, for the release of Barabbas. ¹²Pilate replied, "And what shall I do with the man you call King of the Jews?" ¹³The crowd shouted back, "Crucify him!" ¹⁴Pilate asked, "What evil has he done?" But they shouted the louder, "Crucify him!"

Jesus crowned with thorns

(Mt 27:27; Jn 19:1)

¹⁵As Pilate wanted to please the people, he freed Barabbas; and, having had Jesus flogged, Pilate handed him over to be crucified.

¹⁶The soldiers took him inside the courtyard, known as the praetorium, and called the rest of their companions. ¹⁷They clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting a crown of thorns, they forced it onto his head. ¹⁸Then they began saluting him, “Long life to the King of the Jews!” ¹⁹With a stick they gave him blows on the head and spat on him; then they knelt down, pretending to worship him.

²⁰When they had finished mocking him, they pulled off the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him.

The crucifixion

The soldiers led him out of the city to crucify him. ²¹On the way, they met Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country and forced him to carry the cross of Jesus.

²²When they had led him to the place called Golgotha, which means the Skull, ²³they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he would not take it. ²⁴Then they nailed him to the cross and divided his clothes among themselves, casting lots to decide what every man should take.

²⁵It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. ²⁶The statement of his offense was displayed above his head and it reads, “The King of the Jews.” ²⁷They also crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁸And the Scripture was fulfilled which says: And with lawless ones, he was numbered.

²⁹People passing by laughed at him, shook their heads and jeered, “Aha! So, you are able to tear down the temple and build it up in three days? ³⁰Save yourself now and come down from the cross!”

³¹In the same way, the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him, saying to one another, “The man who saved others cannot save himself. ³²Let’s see the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from his cross and then we will believe in him.” Even the men who were crucified with Jesus insulted him.

The death of Jesus

(Mt 27:45; Lk 23:44; Jn 19:28)

³³When noon came, darkness fell over the whole land and lasted until three o'clock; ³⁴and at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani?*” which means, “My God, my God, why have you deserted me?” ³⁵As soon as they heard these words, some of the bystanders said, “Listen! He is calling for Elijah.” ³⁶And one of them

went quickly to fill a sponge with bitter wine and, putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink, saying, “Now let’s see whether Elijah comes to take him down.”

³⁷But Jesus uttered a loud cry and gave up his spirit. ³⁸And immediately, the curtain that enclosed the temple Sanctuary was torn in two, from top to bottom.

³⁹The captain, who was standing in front of him, saw how Jesus died and heard the cry he gave; and he said, “Truly, this man was the Son of God.”

⁴⁰There were also some women watching from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome, ⁴¹who had followed Jesus when he was in Galilee and saw to his needs. There were also others who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

The burial

⁴²It was now evening and, as it was Preparation Day, that is the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Joseph was a respected member of the Council, who was himself, waiting for the kingdom of God.

⁴⁴Pilate was surprised that Jesus should have died so soon; so he summoned the captain and inquired if Jesus was already dead. ⁴⁵After hearing the captain, he let Joseph have the body.

⁴⁶Joseph took it down and wrapped it in the linen sheet he had bought. He laid the body in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock and rolled a stone across the entrance to the tomb. ⁴⁷Now Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of Joses took note of where the body had been laid.

MARK 15:1-47

Read: The religious authorities give Jesus to the Roman political authority to condemn him. Pilate gives in to the pressure of the crowd. The soldiers make fun of Jesus and then crucify him on Golgotha, where he dies. A centurion proclaims him “Son of God.” Some followers remain faithful to the Master, and Joseph of Arimathea buries him.

Reflect: Do you consider that Jesus was abandoned by God?

Was Pilate a weak man? As a disciple of Jesus, how would you act in such circumstances? In your opinion, what is the hardest part in following Jesus today?

Pray: Look at a crucifix and pray for all the men and women who suffer unjust sentences. Pray also that Christians will be faithful followers of the Lord: righteous and in solidarity with others.

Act: Approach a church and pray the Via Crucis (Way of the Cross).

He has been raised; he is not here

(Mt 28; Lk 24; Jn 20)

16¹When the Sabbath was over, Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint the body. ²And very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they came to the tomb.

³They were saying to one another, "Who will roll back the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" ⁴But, as they looked up, they noticed that the stone had already been rolled away. It was a very big stone.

⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man in a white robe seated on the right, and they were amazed. ⁶But he said to them, "Don't be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified; he has been raised and is not here. This is, however, the place where they laid him. ⁷Now go, and tell his disciples and Peter: Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there, just as he told you." ⁸The women went out and fled from the tomb for terror and amazement had seized them. And they were so afraid that they said nothing to anyone.

Another conclusion of Mark's gospel

⁹After Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary of Magdala, from whom he had driven out seven demons. ¹⁰She went and reported the news to his followers who were now mourning and weeping. ¹¹But when they heard that he lived and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

¹²After this he showed himself in another form to two of them as they were walking into the country. ¹³These men also went back and told the others, but they did not believe them.

¹⁴Later Jesus showed himself to the Eleven while they were at table. He reproached them for their unbelief, and hardness of heart, in refusing to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

¹⁵Then he told them, “Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News to all creation. ¹⁶The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; the one who refuses to believe will be condemned. ¹⁷Signs like these will accompany those who have believed: in my name they will cast out demons and speak new languages; ¹⁸they will pick up snakes, and if they drink anything poisonous, they will be unharmed; they will lay their hands on the sick and they will be healed.”

¹⁹So then, after speaking to them, the Lord Jesus was taken up into heaven and took his place at the right hand of God. ²⁰The Eleven went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

MARK 16:1-20

Read: Probably the Gospel ended in verse 8. The women find the tomb empty, an angel announces the resurrection of the Lord and tells them to announce it to the other disciples. They leave scared, and do not say anything to anyone. To give a proper conclusion, later the other verses would have been added.

Reflect: Do you feel in your daily life the presence of the risen Jesus? How? What is the hardest part in announcing the resurrection of Jesus? What does the unfinished end of the Gospel of Mark suggest to you?

Pray: Pray to God so that Christians can bear witness with our lives that Jesus has conquered death. May we proclaim that the God of our faith is a God of life.

Act: Celebrate the Lord’s resurrection by participating in an activity that takes place in your parish in favor of life.