



“Holy Week, the seven days before the feast of Easter, from Palm Sunday morning to Holy Saturday night, is charged with meaning. It is a microcosm of Jesus’ public life seen in bas-relief. All of its components are there--the population at large, the temple priests and their concern for orthodoxy, the prophetic words of Jesus and the political concerns of Roman officials for the social upheavals they feared could come from them, the arrest and isolation of Jesus, and the fears and confusion of His followers. **Condensed into one week, all these elements in the life of Jesus are laid bare for all to see. It is a dark week, a week heavy with the intensity of the drama among them.”** Joan Chittester

“I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” John 12:24 lays bare for us the reality that the death of death actually brings forth life and resurrection for all to taste. Reading through the Gospel narratives of the last week of Jesus’ life, time slows down, the frenetic events leading to the crucifixion of Christ increasingly being laid bare for all to witness, no detail spared. It’s as if Jesus was deliberately setting us up for the mystery to come: a broken and scarred body, defeated in front of all, actually initiating the influx of life itself. As Gungor mournfully sings, *“Like the waters flooding the desert. Like the sunrise showing all things. Where it comes flowers grow. Lions sleep, gravestones roll. Where death dies all things life.”* (*When Death Dies*).

From the heights of praise echoing through the streets on Sunday, to the betrayal of close friends on Thursday, to the crushing weight of despair on Friday, to the silence of grief on Saturday, Holy Week crescendos and falls through the hours, simultaneously the pinnacle of hope and the pit of hopelessness. Through it all stands Jesus resolute, unwavering in his willingness to suffer unto death so that death itself may die.

The writer of Hebrews gives poetic language to the weight of this week, exhorting all to **“fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross,** scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful man, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood” (Hebrews 12:2-4).

Holy Week is a crescendoing collection of days built one upon the other, set apart from the other 51, for the express purpose of celebrating the death of death, once and for all. For it is only when death dies, that all things live. Welcome to **When Death Dies**, 3rd Place. The hour is now upon us. A kernel of wheat is falling to the ground, dying for all to live. The harvest of seeds is coming, all things alive...when death dies.

“Jesus will die, yes, but not only. There is more than death to come. All in all, it is a week that brings us face-to-face with the great question, why must this happen? What is all this suffering about? But deep down inside of us, we already know what the life of Jesus and the days of Holy Week confirm: there are some things worth living for, even if we find ourselves having to die for them as well.” ~Joan Chittester

Note: Please use the Liturgical Year handouts on *“Imagining the Text: Ignatian Contemplation,”* as well as the *#Trainnaked Bible Study*, to help you meditate on the art above & the Scriptural texts throughout Holy Week.

Palm Sunday: “They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the King of Israel! **Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, ‘Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey colt.’**” Reflectively read John 12:12-19 in context.

#TrainNaked Challenge: *Model Jesus’ humility through deliberately (yet politely!) refusing the ‘best’ of anything you are offered this week (seat in a car, food or drink, etc).*

Holy Monday: “‘Leave her alone,’” Jesus replied. ‘It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.’” Reflectively read John 12:1-11 in context.

#TrainNaked Challenge: *Identify an extravagant possession of yours that you can bless another with in an intentional manner. Decide how to “crash their dinner party” as Mary did to Christ.*

Holy Tuesday: “I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” Reflectively read John 12:20-36 in context.

#TrainNaked Challenge: *What situation is currently presenting itself in your life that you can die to self within? Who can benefit from your sacrifice of ego for their good? Pursue this death.*

Holy Wednesday: “After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, ‘I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.’” Reflectively read John 13:18-30 in context.

#TrainNaked Challenge: *Prayerfully ask the Spirit to identify whether you have betrayed (or been betrayed by) a close friend. Ask the Spirit how to release this hurt, beginning to make the relationship right again.*

Maundy Thursday: “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” Reflectively read John 13:1-17, 31-35 in context.

#TrainNaked Challenge: *Wash the feet of someone under your authority/provision (parents to children, spouse to spouse, boss to employees, etc) as a symbol of your love and commitment to sacrificial service for their good.*

Good Friday: “‘Here is your king,’ Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, ‘Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!’ ‘Shall I crucify your king?’ Pilate asked. ‘We have no king but Caesar,’ the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.” Reflectively read John 18:1-19:42 in context.

#TrainNaked Challenge: *Find a quiet, lonesome place outside where you can contemplate the arrest, trial, lashing, crucifixion, and death of Christ. Invite the Spirit into this period of silence.*

Holy Saturday: “Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. **Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.**” Reflectively read John 19:38-42 in context.

#TrainNaked Challenge: *Visit a local cemetery, finding a tombstone that is meaningful to you. Sit by it for a few moments, imagining the grief, despair, and loss the disciples must have felt.*

Sing Along: “Like the waters flooding the desert; Like the sunrise showing all things; Where it comes flowers grow; Lions sleep, gravestones roll; **Where death dies, all things live;** Where it comes poor men feast; Kings fall down to their knees; **When death dies all things live; All things live**” *When Death Dies* gives voice to our hearts throughout Holy Week. Search Grooveshark.com for the Gungor track and sing along.

When Death Dies Gungor

Like the waters flooding the desert
Like the sunrise showing all things

Where it comes flowers grow
Lions sleep, gravestones roll
Where death dies all things live

Where it comes poor men feast
Kings fall down to their knees
When death dies all things live
All things live

Like a woman searching and finding love
Like an ocean buried and bursting forth

Where it comes flowers grow
Lions sleep, gravestones roll
Where death dies all things come alive

Where it comes water's clean
Children fed
All believe
When death dies all things live
All things live

Where it comes flowers grow
Lions sleep, gravestones roll
Where death dies all things live