

Passion Sunday

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Date: 21 March 2021

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[0 : 0 0] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Today is the fifth Sunday in Lent, which is called Passion Sunday.

On Passion Sunday, the crosses are veiled as we now move from Lent into the preparation for the passion and death of our Savior.

Our journey in the wilderness will end at Golgotha, as the Savior of the world dies as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Easter is a new day where life is restored and where the world that once wept now rejoices in a new creation that is a new beginning.

But first, the church enters into a time of mourning. There is mourning before there is much rejoicing.

[0 : 5 9] As a parish in the tradition of the one holy Catholic and apostolic church, the liturgical calendar is not merely a recollection of the past events or historical events.

No, it's our participation in those events. Because in Christ, we are united with the eternal God who is not bound by time nor space.

The church year is the ongoing and ever-present reality as we now join in these sacred events as baptized Christians, making our way as pilgrims and participants to the city of God.

Passion Sunday with its crosses veiled is a time for the bride of Christ, that is, the church, for us to put on her garments of mourning and to wear the veil of a widow that weeps.

We weep because of the passion and pain that our Lord endured. But the question we need to ask is why? Why did our Lord have to die?

[2 : 1 8] Why was he hung from a tree being cursed by his enemies? Here in our gospel reading, we are given insight into why such hatred spewed forth from his own people, that is, the Jewish people.

Here in John chapter 8, Jesus is accused of being a Samaritan and having a demon. This accusation came because earlier in John chapter 8, our Lord claimed that he was the light of the world that had come from heaven.

When the religious leaders accused our Lord of being a false teacher because he had no witnesses to back up this claim, Jesus appealed to the greatest witness, his father in heaven.

What Jesus is saying is that he and the father are one. And if that were not enough to ruffle their feathers, he goes on to say that Abraham longed to see the day of his coming.

The leaders are again baffled. They're baffled because is this Jesus of Nazareth really saying that he knew Abraham?

[3 : 4 1] I mean, our Lord was not even 50 years of age. How could he know Abraham, who lived over 1700 years before our Lord's birth?

And then Jesus drops the real bomb. As he says here in verse 58, Friends, our Lord was crucified because he claimed to be the eternal God.

He was the one who walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the garden. He was the one who appeared to Abraham. He was the one who wrestled with Jacob.

He's the one who appeared in the burning bush before Moses. He was the captain and commander of Joshua's army that marched around Jericho. He is the one identified as the angel of the Lord throughout the old covenant.

He is the great high priest, the great Melchizedek. He is the one standing in the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. And what our Lord is declaring to these people who accuse him of having a demon is that he is the one who existed even before the great Abraham.

[5 : 13] He is the one who died in the holy of the Lord. He is the one to whom all bow down and worship as God and as Lord over all. We read the response to this claim here in verse 59.

Friends, why did Abraham rejoice to see the day of our Lord's coming?

Because instead of his son Isaac or that ram that was caught in the thicket, which we read about in Genesis chapter 22, God himself now has come to this earth in order to be the sacrificial lamb that takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus came to take away our sin. Any other ram or lamb was only a temporary fix to the real problem, and that is the depth of sin.

Jesus is the eternal God who has come in human flesh in order to ascend to his throne, the cross.

[6 : 41] And it's by his own blood and through his sacrificial death that we are now washed. We are given eternal life.

We are made children of the promise, that promise made with Abraham. That promise that extended to Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, and all who put their trust in the Lord because we share now in the life of Christ.

And through his own blood, we are made holy, spotless. And it's by his own cross.

Why did Jesus do this for us? Why did he die for us? Why did he die for each and every one of you? Because he loves you.

Because he loves you. Oh, love, how deep, how broad, how high, how passing thought and fantasy that God, the son of God, should take our mortal form for mortal sake.

[8 : 04] For us, to wicked men betrayed, scourged, mocked, in purple robe arrayed, he bore the shameful cross and death.

For us, at length, gave up his breath. Friends, it was love that compelled our Lord to come to this earth so that by his death and through his cross, we might now have life.

And on this day of Passion Sunday, may we simply bow our heads, say thank you, and amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.