
The Passion of Christ / The Compassion of God



Fourteen
Meditations

SSA SOCIAL JUSTICE OFFICE 2014

1. Jesus, the face of God's compassion (Mt 4:13)

Reflection

Jesus moves to Capernaum, which probably means "village of compassion" or "village of comfort." It's quite indicative of the mission God has entrusted to him. The most explicit passage of our loving and compassionate God is in the book of Exodus: "I have seen the misery of my people, I have heard their cry and gone down ..." (Exodus 3)

Sharing

What is compassion to you?

How has the compassion of God touched your life?



2. People affected by the compassion of Jesus (Mark 1: 34)

Reflection

"Jesus' compassion is God's mercy which permeates to the very depths of his being." (Yves Guillemette)

"We know from experience, one's own suffering helps make the suffering of others resonate; nothing else opens one up to compassion in the same way." (Lytta Basset)

"Justice becomes compassion and taking responsibility for others who are in need."
(Luciano Manicardi)

Sharing

Make a list of people who have experienced the compassion of Jesus.

How did Esther Blondin discover that God is full of compassion?



3. Compassion, and the breaking of bread (Luke 22:19)

Reflection

"The breaking of bread is a sign of life; more than just food for people whom we meet along the way. It's food of compassion and listening to the poor, of forgiveness for sinners. It's trust given back to the sick and reintegration for those who have been left behind. It refocuses religion on the essential of worship for God, through respect of inner freedom and the responsibility of the individual." (Yves Guillemette)

Sharing

How does the Eucharist nourish our will to follow Christ's loving compassion on a personal and community level? And how does it feed our choice to be a compassionate presence (referring to the Orientation of Chapter 2013) ?



4. Compassion, another view of the relationship (John 13:14)

Reflection

Referring to the washing of feet, Jesus clearly tells his disciples that he must leave the table and go be among the excluded; testimony that by compassion and hospitality, everyone has a place in society. Jesus also cares about the future of his disciples in the great prayer of chapter 17 in the Gospel of John.

Sharing

How does the hospitality of Jesus come to evangelize our vision and practice of hospitality?

Who are those excluded from the table today?



5 . Gethsemane: the angel comforting Jesus before the event (Luke 22:43)

Reflection

Jesus sees how the world loves darkness rather than light. The terrible ordeal that Jesus will endure does not leave his Father indifferent. His Father sends him a consoling angel, to remind Jesus that the light shines in the midst of darkness.

Sharing

Have I experienced consolation from God while going through an ordeal?

What actions and words of consolation can be offered to those who have experienced great tragedies in their lives (death of a loved one, job loss, financial hardship, disaster, earthquake, etc.)?



6. Gethsemane: treated as a outlaw, Jesus healed (Luke 22:51)

Reflection

Upon learning that Jesus has been arrested as a outlaw, Peter takes a sword and cuts off the ear of one of those who seized Jesus. Jesus requests a final miracle before his death: his compassion heals the servant of the High Priest. Peter did not follow his master's path; he demanded a violent gesture instead of mercy.

Sharing

In my personal life, in the community, or in society, when is violence (symbolized here by the sword) a response valued more than compassion?



7. The gaze of Jesus on Peter (Luke 22:61)

Reflection

While Peter was willing to do anything to defend Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, here he denies him three times. The gaze of the Lord is a look of truth and compassion. Peter's tears say how he was touched and deeply moved by the compassion of the Lord.

Sharing

How can Jesus's watchful eye inspire our attitude when we feel rejected or have been betrayed? Have I been moved by the compassion of others?



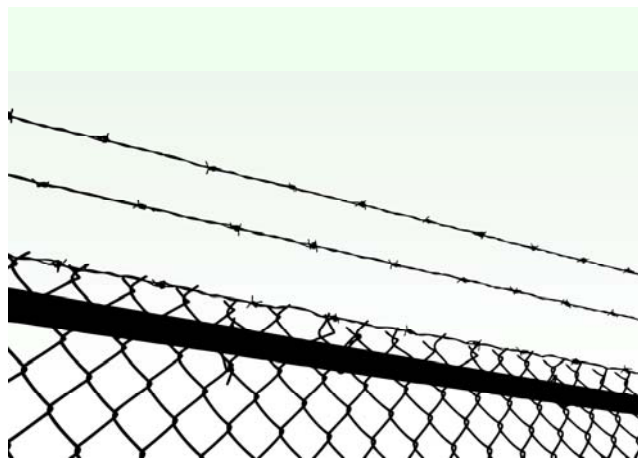
8. Violence: no compassion (Luke 22:63-65)

Reflection

The violence against Jesus with the consent of the crowd is an illustration of no compassion. It is the exact opposite of "caring of each other."

Sharing

How are various forms of violence the antithesis of the Creator's plan for humanity? How can we change the culture of violence to a culture of compassion?



9. No display of miracles for Herod (Luke 23:8)

Reflection

Pilate sends Jesus to Herod who has stressed his curiosity to see who can perform miracles. But Jesus is not a magician and does not put on a show. He frees people from their infirmities in order to help them witness the compassion of the Father, due to their faith. This divine quality of compassion goes completely over Herod's head.

Sharing

How can we exhibit the Lord's compassion in a world that prefers spectacle over forging true and liberating relationships?



10. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus (Mark 15:2)

Reflection

Chosen at random, a simple peasant returning from his field is forced by the Romans to carry the cross of Jesus behind him. This is Simon of Cyrene. What often goes overlooked, and what is one of the fruits of this random choice, is that Simon of Cyrene's children, Alexander and Rufus, are known to early Christians and may be the genesis of a Christian community.

Sharing

Will there be any fortuitous chances that engender compassion and life?



11. Jesus and the women of Jerusalem (Luke 22: 27-31)

Reflection

Jesus does not want to be the center of attention: he encourages women to have a very clear-headed analysis about what might happen to them and their children if the system of death and exclusion continues in our world.

Sharing

How to uncover the logic of death and exclusion in our desire to follow the compassionate Lord?



12. Jesus and the thief (Luke 22:43)

Reflection

It is surprising that someone recognizes the majesty of Jesus as he suffers the same fate as the Crucified. Surprisingly, for a thief, Jesus opens the gates of heaven and a gracious and merciful God.

Sharing

In situations where all seems lost, as in watching Jesus ensure that the thief will be with him, what does the Lord tell us today?



13. The last breath, a gift (John 18:25-27.34)

Reflection

In the Gospel of John, the Crucified donates a son to a mother, and a mother to a son. Even with his last breath, Jesus gives.

Sharing

How can we share the gifts of God in the community, and extend signs of God's compassion to the people with whom we are on a mission to assist?

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul asks, "Can I call you in Christ's name? Is there his tenderness and compassion in you?" (Phil 2:1)

If Paul asked us the same question today, what would be our response?



14. Resurrection: God's affirmation of compassion (Acts 2:22-24)

Reflection

In raising Jesus, God says Yes to the life he led, Yes to forgiveness, Yes to welcoming, Yes to compassion.

Sharing

What has our compassionate God affirmed in the community? What are the benefits for our world?





PHOTOS: ISTOCK, ANA MARIA GAJARDO,
RENAUDE GRÉGOIRE

Renaude Grégoire
SSA Social Justice Office
Lachine, Canada
February 2014