



St. John's Parish
Roman Catholic Church

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AMID MY UNANSWERED "WHY...?", HE IS THERE

PALM SUNDAY - MARCH 29, 2026

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (*Mt 27:46*). This is the cry that today's liturgy has us repeat in the responsorial psalm (*cf. Ps 22:2*), the only cry that Jesus makes from the cross in the Gospel we have heard. Those words bring us to the very heart of Christ's passion, the culmination of the sufferings he endured for our salvation. "Why have you forsaken me?"

The sufferings of Jesus were many, and whenever we listen to the account of the Passion, they pierce our hearts. There were sufferings of the body: let us think of the slaps and beatings, the flogging and the crowning with thorns, and in the end, the cruelty of the crucifixion. There were also sufferings of the soul: the betrayal of Judas, the denials of Peter, the condemnation of the religious and civil authorities, the mockery of the guards, the jeering at the foot of the cross, the rejection of the crowd, utter failure and the flight of the disciples. Yet, amid all these sorrows, Jesus remained certain of one thing: the closeness of the Father. Now, however, the unthinkable has taken place. Before dying, he cries out: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The forsakenness of Jesus.

This is the most searing of all sufferings, the suffering of the spirit. At his most tragic hour, Jesus experiences abandonment by God. Prior to that moment, he had never called the Father by his generic name, "God". To convey the impact of this, the Gospel also reports his words in Aramaic. These are the only words of Jesus from the cross that have come down to us in the original language. The real event is the extreme abasement, being forsaken by the Father, forsaken by God. We find it hard even to grasp what great suffering he embraced out of love for us. He sees the gates of heaven close, he finds himself at the bitter edge, the shipwreck of life, the collapse of certainty. And he cries out: "Why?" A "why" that embraces every other "why" ever spoken. "Why, God?"

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" In the Bible, the word "forsake" is powerful. We hear it at moments of extreme pain: love that fails, or is rejected or betrayed; children who are rejected and aborted; situations of repudiation, the lot of widows and orphans; broken marriages, forms of social exclusion, injustice and oppression; the solitude of sickness. In a word, in the drastic severing of the bonds that unite us to others. There, this word is spoken: "abandonment". Christ brought all of this to the cross; upon his shoulders, he bore the sins of the world. And at the supreme moment, Jesus, the only-begotten, beloved Son of the Father, experienced a situation utterly alien to his very being: abandonment, the distance of God.

Why did it have to come to this? He did it for us. There is no other answer. For us. Brothers and sisters, today this is not merely a show. Every one of us, hearing of Jesus' abandonment, can say: for me. This abandonment is the price he paid for me. He became one with each of us in order to be completely and definitively one with us to the very end. He experienced abandonment in order not to leave us prey to despair, in order to stay at our side forever. He did this for me, for you, because whenever you or I or anyone else seems pinned to the wall, lost in a blind alley, plunged into the abyss of abandonment, sucked into a whirlwind of so many "whys" without an answer, there can still be a hope: Jesus himself, for you, for me. It is not the end, because Jesus was there and even now, he is at your side. He endured the distance of abandonment in order to take up into his love every possible distance that we can feel. So that each of us might say: in my failings, and each of us has failed many times, in my desolation, whenever I feel betrayed or betrayed others, whenever I feel cast aside or have cast aside others, whenever I feel forsaken or have abandoned others, let us think of Jesus, who was abandoned, betrayed and cast aside. There, we find him. When I feel lost and confused, when I feel that I can't go on, he is beside me. Amid all my unanswered questions "why...?", he is there.

That is how the Lord saves us, from within our questioning "why?" From within that questioning, he opens the horizon of hope that does not disappoint. On the cross, even as he felt utter abandonment – this is the ultimate end – Jesus refused to yield to despair; instead, he prayed and trusted. He cried out his "why?" in the words of the Psalm (*22:2*), and commended himself into the hands of the Father, despite how distant he felt him to be (*cf. Lk 23:46*) or rather, whom he did not feel, for instead he felt himself abandoned.

In the hour of his abandonment, Jesus continued to trust. At the hour of abandonment, he continued to love his disciples who had fled, leaving him alone. In his abandonment he forgave those who crucified him (*v. 34*). Here we see the abyss of our many evils immersed in a greater love, with the result that our isolation becomes fellowship.

Jesus, in his abandonment, asks us to open our eyes and hearts to all who find themselves abandoned. For us, as disciples of the "forsaken" Lord, no man, woman or child can be regarded as an outcast, no one left to himself or herself. Let us remember that the rejected and the excluded are living icons of Christ: they remind us of his reckless love, his forsakenness that delivers us from every form of loneliness and isolation. Brothers and sisters, today let us implore this grace: to love Jesus in his abandonment and to love Jesus in the abandoned all around us. Let us ask for the grace to see and acknowledge the Lord who continues to cry out in them. May we not allow his voice to go unheard amid the deafening silence of indifference. God has not left us alone; let us care, then, for those who feel alone and abandoned. Then, and only then, will we be of one mind and heart with the one who, for our sake, "emptied himself" (*Phil 2:7*). He emptied himself completely for us.

POPE FRANCIS — April 2, 2023

WE MOVE INTO HOLY WEEK, recalling the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The week begins with the **Blessing and distribution of Palms** and solemn proclamation of the **Passion of Jesus Christ**. On Monday, the **Mass of Chrism**, Sacred oils are blessed and the Oil of Chrism is consecrated for use in the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil, and for sacramental celebrations in our parishes throughout the coming year. On **Holy Thursday**, we gather to remember **The Last Supper** and to recall that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, giving us an example of service. On **Good Friday**, we gather to remember Jesus' horrific death and to **adore the Cross of Christ** – the sign of our salvation. On **Holy Saturday**, we gather to celebrate the **Easter Vigil**. Easter fires will be lit as the sun goes down, the Easter candle will be lit and, in the **Light of Christ** we will listen to the **Word of God**. Its celebrated the **Sacraments of Initiation**, and together renew the promises of our Baptism. From this celebration, the Easter Season begins, the great feast of the **Resurrection of the Lord**.

LENTEN SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION
 Tuesday, March 31 from 6pm - 8pm

ENGLISH MASS SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday of the Passion of Lord

Saturday, March 28 **5:00 PM**
 +Ron Deitner +Maria Rebelo

Sunday, March 29 **9:00 AM**
 For All Parishioners Living & Deceased

Tuesday, March 31 **11:00 AM**
 +Dolores Sedlmeir

Wednesday, April 1 **11:00 AM**

Paschal Triduum

Holy Thursday, April 2 **6:00 PM**
Mass of the Lord's Supper

Good Friday, April 3
Stations of the Cross **2:15 PM**
Liturgy of the Passion of the Lord **3:00 PM**

Holy Saturday, April 4 **8:00 PM**
Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday The Resurrection of the Lord

Sunday, April 5 **9:00 AM**
 For All Parishioners Living & Deceased

MISAS EN ESPAÑOL

Domingo de Ramos de la Pasión del Señor

Sabado 28 de Marzo **7:00PM**

Domingo 29 de Marzo **11:00 AM & 1:00PM**
 Por la Comunidad Parroquial

Martes 31 de Marzo **12:00 PM**
 +Elias Lopez

Miercoles 1 de abril **12:00 PM**

Triduo Pascual

Jueves Santo 2 de abril **9:00 PM**
Misa de la Cena del Señor

Viernes Santo 3 de abril
Vía Crucis **6:00 PM**
Liturgia de la Pasión del Señor **7:00 PM**

Sábado Santo 4 de abril **10:30 PM**
Vigilia Pascual

Domingo de Pascua de la Resurrección del Señor

Domingo 5 de abril **11:00 AM & 1:00 PM**
 Por la Comunidad Parroquial