**7 Church Pilgrimage**

Dear Pilgrims,

On this solemn evening, I commend you for going on this spiritual journey of tending to our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane.

The garden of Gethsemane is a place caught in the middle and filled with tension. For Our Lord, it is flanked by significant activity. On one side is Jesus’ Last Supper, the institution of the Eucharist and holy priesthood. On the other side is the Passion and Resurrection. Between these momentous occasions for the people of God is Jesus’ call to the apostles and for you today: “remain here and keep watch with me.” In this, he invites us to be with him - in the midst of his burden, in the midst of his pain. But he also wants to walk alongside us in the tension in our lives - to accompany us, to make us whole. All we must do is remain with him. It is my prayer that for these few precious moments you will take him up on this offer. Turn away from the distractions, obligations, and activities of the past and what may come in the future. For now, simply remain with Jesus Christ.

Know that as you seek Our Lord through this time of pilgrimage, you go with my prayers for you. May Our Lord Jesus bless you with his peace in these sacred days and always.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge*

**WELCOME TO THE GARDEN**

On this evening some 2000 years ago, Jesus of Nazareth went out into a garden in the dead of night. In agony he prayed, knowing what He was about to endure. He was utterly alone, even though he had asked for the accompaniment of His friends. As Catholics, we believe that Christ is alive in the Scripture and the Eucharist. So tonight, we join Him in the garden, through Word and Sacrament. Thank you for being with Him.

Throughout our Diocese, people will enter this pilgrimage of remaining with Jesus in the garden. This guide provides you with Scriptures verses, reflections from our priests, and tools to make the most of this time in prayer. Please use these however you wish–what is most important is that you be with Jesus.

**HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

This pilgrimage weaves together passages from all four Gospels to take you through the narrative of Jesus’ time in the garden of Geth­semane. It is broken into seven reflections which we recommend you pray through at seven different churches. You can do it with a group or on your own. If you are unable to travel, you may still use this guide to pray anywhere! We recommend you spend 10-15 minutes in prayer with each station but go at a pace that is natural for you.

We consolidated information about times you can pray at our many parishes and created suggested routes by region. Parishes that are not listed in this guide are currently unable to host pilgrims. Select the route that works best for you/your group and use our interactive Google Map to easily navigate to the parishes! These routes are suggestions so feel free to add (from oth­er routes), omit, or double up on parishes ac­cording to what works best for your travel! If a parish is not listed, it is likely because they are unable to accommodate pilgrims at this time.

**PRAY**

Consider using this process of engaging in silent prayer for each reflection:

**ACKNOWLEDGE** – As you begin prayer, acknowledge the presence of God. Invite Him to be present to you.

**RELATE** – Take a personal inventory of your thoughts, emotions, and desires. Share them with God.

**RECEIVE** – Pause and ask God what He thinks/feels. Listen for Him. Open yourself to receive from Him – be it words, ideas, feelings, or more questions.

**RESPOND** – Engage in dialogue with God and seek resolutions (be they large or small) wherever possible. Offer your resolu­tions to God and ask for Him to accomplish them in you.

**1st Church: Remain**

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “ Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to feel sorrow and distress. Then he said to them, “My soul is sor­rowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch with me.” (Matthew 26: 36-38)

**REFLECTION** *—Fr. Steven Oetjen, Parochial Vicar at St. James*

Here in the garden, Christ prays to His Father. This is by no means the beginning of their relationship or their conversation. Before all things were made, the Son was with the Father, one with the Father. Who of us can conceive what this perfect communion of love is like, this divine communication between Father and Son for all eternity? What a mystery to us!

Then the eternal Son became man. This was no interruption of the perfect, eternal exchange of love between the Father and Son. Rather, our humanity was taken up into that exchange in His very person. Incarnate as man, the Son’s eternal exchange with the Father took the form of prayer. The life of Christ was one of constant prayer. His mind was always lifted up to the Father. He always saw the Father. He always did the Father’s will. He often withdrew from others to be alone to give voice to this constant prayer. At times, the Gospels even record for us some of the words He spoke in prayer to the Father. Gethsemane is just one of those times.

He tells His disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” It seems that the profound mystery of Jesus’ prayer is still kept some­what opaque to His disciples. At this point, it is still something at a distance, something they have not yet begun to join in on. And yet it is precisely the prayer of Jesus, this intimate relationship with the Father, that we hope to join in on now and for all eternity. Prayer, for us, is not a mere aiming our thoughts wishfully at a far-off deity. That may be all we are capable of doing on our own. But we are not on our own. Jesus asks us to remain with Him — to be in Him, and He in us — so that we would be caught up into His own prayer to the Father.

**PONDER**

What has been causing you sorrow and distress? Will you let Jesus remain with you in this?

1. Can you try to remain with Jesus tonight and share your burdens honestly with Him?

**2nd Church: Surrender**

He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, “Abba, Father,\* all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will.” (Mark 14: 35-36)

[And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground.] (Luke 22: 43-44)

**REFLECTION***—Fr. Edward Hathaway, Pastor of the Basilica of St. Mary*

As we contemplate the passion and suffering Our Lord endured, not only out of filial obedience to the Father, but also for the love of each one of us, we are invited to enter into this mystery of abandonment to Divine Providence. We all experience moments of intense suffer­ing, trial and pain. There are also daily contradictions that must be overcome – unexpected roadblocks to our plans, difficult personal­ities, our own frailty. As we mature, we realize that peace is not the fruit of everything in our life going well and orderly. This would be a very fragile peace because life does not always unfold as we expect and events do not always go as we have planned. The losses of a loved one, financial reversals, health issues, and personal attacks can cause us to suffer. At the same time, these can also be moments of amazing spiritual growth. Peace is the tranquility of order within our soul, discovered as we trust in God. Accepting and embracing the crosses we encounter in the adventure of living our life, rather than pushing against them or dragging them, can set us free. This takes humility and an awareness of our inability to control events or the people we love. Surrender. As one priest related, “There is one messiah, and it’s not you”.

In his book “The Way of Trust and Love” Father Jacques Phillippe re­minds us that we can only accept the Father’s love for us as we accept not only contradictions, but also ourselves as we are. “Despite our good will and our sincere desire never to refuse God anything and love him with all our hearts, we will come face-to-face with limita­tions, weaknesses, sometimes falls, that may be very humiliating and that we must accept…Let’s ask the Holy Spirit to help us harmonize a real desire for holiness, the firm determination to experience on­going conversion with humility, and the peaceful acceptance of our limitations and weaknesses.”

**PONDER**

1. How can you balance the desire for holiness with accepting your own limitations?
2. What are you holding onto that needs to be put in the Lord’s hands?

**3rd Church: Vigilant**

When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing. Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him. He returned a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleep­ing and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is at hand.” (Mark 14: 37-42)

**REFLECTION***—Fr. Thomas Cavanaugh, Parochial Vicar at St. John the Apostle*

Vigilance! Jesus is calling us to be vigilant...or simply to remain awake to Him and for Him. Why is this so hard? What can we do to overcome those vices that keep us asleep to the path of grace and virtue that leads to the Resurrection.

In the letter to the Hebrews 2:15 it says, “all (our) lives (we) were held in slavery (to sin) by...fear of death.” The stated purpose of the Letter to the Hebrews is Spiritual Rest...yet we chose sin and slavery to it because of fear of death. At the Last Supper the disciples went for bliss and joy, to sorrow and despair. They share in the feast of union with God, but then discovered they would lose that very night the gift of living life with life Himself. The vice of sloth, says St. Thomas Aquinas, is a sin against Charity, love. It is the act of avoid­ance because of a failure in love. Yet when we give into this sin we don’t tell ourselves the truth do we? We must deceive ourselves and delude ourselves in order to be justified in the sin of sloth. The truth is the burden of love is not too heavy, if we say yes with the Virgin Mary it is a big enough yes to say no to all vice. “Take My yoke upon yourselves...and you will find rest; for my yoke is easy, my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

Admittedly the Last Supper probably was a big meal, with several glasses of wine, so sloth was an easy option after the vice of glut­tony. And who wants to carry the thought burden of “I might betray my best friend to his death?!” It was also close to midnight or later when they arrived at the garden. And the garden of Gethsemane was where they had slept every night that week. So who wouldn’t have fallen asleep, right?! But the mystics say there is a deeper prob­lem. Saint Juan de la Cruz says that when you begin to go through the dark night of the soul you must first be purified of that fire by which only God can purify. Just before this dark night (which they experience in seeing their Lord upon the cross) all their sin and vice will be uncovered and we will see that it is not only sloth or gluttony but every evil, most of all pride, which has been dwelling within our flesh because of original sin. Prayer stops helping. Sacraments feel meaningless. Friends bring no comfort. All you want is to be free from the pain of knowing just how sinful you really are.

What is the way through it? What is the antidote to break free and enter through this dark night into the light of union with Our Good God in a permanent way? Jesus says, “stay awake with me and pray.” In a word: Vigilance

**PONDER**

1. How do you think Jesus felt when he found his friends asleep during His time of agony?
2. In what ways have you failed to be vigilant of Christ in your life?
3. Do you look for Him in your day or have you asked Him what He wants for your life?

**4th Church: Identity**

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accom­panied by a large crowd, with swords and clubs, who had come from the chief priests and the elders of the people.(Matthew 26: 47)

Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them, “Whom are you looking for?” They answered him, “Jesus the Nazorean.” He said to them, “I AM.” Judas his betrayer was also with them. When he said to them, “I AM,” they turned away and fell to the ground. So he again asked them, “Whom are you looking for?” They said, “Jesus the Nazorean.” Jesus answered, “I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.” This was to fulfill what he had said, “I have not lost any of those you gave me.” (John 18: 4-9)

**REFLECTION***—Fr. Bjorn Lundberg, Pastor at Sacred Heart of Jesus*

Jesus begins his ministry by asking people what they are seeking. He enters into the drama of the Passion asking the same question. About to be arrested, He asks the crowd who are they seeking? Why is our search so critical?

This key unlocks our heart. To be happy is to possess a good that we desire. Most of our lives, we are constantly looking for some­thing, someone, to fulfill this need. Alcoholics Anonymous teaches, “An expectation is a premeditated resentment.” We are often disap­pointed because what we hoped for, ends up disappointing. U2 sang, “I still haven’t found what I’m looking for.” Mick Jagger sang, “I can’t get no satisfaction.” Country music singer Johnny Lee performed the song “Lookin’ for Love in all the wrong places,” for the movie Urban Cowboy. Its an age old search. Jesus poses this question to us as well, “Who are you looking for? What are you looking for?”

An awesome new series on formed.org is called “The Search.” The first episode reflects on our search for meaning and happiness. We are always looking for more because we are made for the ultimate happiness.

Jesus tells us His identity: “I AM.” He is the way to happiness in eternity. He is the fulfillment of all our desires. Bishop Sheen said that sometimes, the only way God can enter some of our hearts is by breaking them. But He went first. He broke His Sacred Heart to heal ours. Our identity is found in where we come from and who we are. We are His. Made by, made for, and fulfilled in Him. He searches for us, and we are searching for Him. He has entered the thicket of battle to enter your heart and mine. Holy Week is His journey into our hearts.

**PONDER**

1. Jesus poses this question to you: Who are you looking for? What are you looking for?

Jesus affirms His identity as God by invoking His name: I AM. He tells you that He is the one that you are looking for: do you believe Him?

**5th Church: Abandoned**

His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying, “The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him.” Immediately he went over to Jesus and said, “Hail, Rabbi!”\* and he kissed him. (Matthew 26: 48-49)

“Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” (Luke 22: 48)

Jesus answered him, “Friend, do what you have come for.” (Matthew 26: 50)

**REFLECTION***—Fr. Álvaro Montero, DCJM, Pastor at Our Lady of Angels*

All gestures from Christ in the Passion should be seen in the light of his relationship with God the Father. Otherwise, we will miss their deepest meaning. Judas asked the chief priests: “What are you will­ing to give me if I hand him over to you? They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.” Matthew 26:15-16). That opportunity came after the Last Supper, at a place frequently visited by Christ with his friends: the Garden of Gethsemane. It was there that he was abandoned: Judas betrayed Him with a kiss, a sign of intimacy. The other apostles fled.

However, we can see this event in the light of Christ´s filial com­munion with the Heavenly Father. The discourse of the Good Shep­herd holds the key: “This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and pow­er to take it up again. This command I have received from my Fa­ther” (John 10:17-18). Yes, Jesus was betrayed, but he had previously abandoned himself into his Father´s hands. This is the essence of His prayer in the Garden and it was prepared short before, at the last Supper. The second Eucharist Prayer summarizes it beautifully in the words before consecration: “Before he was given up to death, a death he freely accepted, he took bread and gave you thanks.”

I invite you to learn this prayer and repeat it often: “Father, I aban­don myself into your hands; do with me what you will. Whatever you may do, I thank you: I am ready for all, I accept all. Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures - I wish no more than this, O Lord. Into your hands I commend my soul: I offer it to you with all the love of my heart, for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself, to surrender myself into your hands without reserve, and with boundless confidence, for you are my Father.” Bl. Charles de Foucauld.

**PONDER**

1. Think about your prayer in times of trial. How much do you em­brace your sufferings with an act of abandonment and trust in God, Our Father?
2. God´s gifts are irrevocable. In the face of your sins, or those of others who hurt you, pray to Jesus how he was able to call Judas “friend” even in his betrayal. Do not let your sin make you for­getful of your vocation and God´s gifts.

**6th Church: Healed**

His disciples realized what was about to happen, and they asked, “Lord, shall we strike with a sword?” And one of them struck the high priest’s servant and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said in reply, “Stop, no more of this!” Then he touched the servant’s ear and healed him. (Luke 22: 49-51)

**REFLECTION***—Fr. Thomas Nguyen, Parochial Vicar at St. Leo the Great*

Loneliness happens when love is unloved, when love is rejected. The loneliest one is the one who loves the most and yet feels lonely next to the one whom he loves the most. This happens when Love is be­trayed with a kiss. Who could fathom the broken heart of the loneli­est One in His loneliest moment? And yet, His love is greater. Even in His agony, Jesus still says no to violence, says no to accusation. “Stop, no more of this,” He orders. Even in His desperate moment, His heal­ing hands still reach out to touch the ear of the one who comes to take his life. Who can fathom the healing power of Love?

In listening to the word of the serpent in the Garden, our first par­ents cut off their ears, making them incapable of hearing God’s word. They were expelled from the Garden. Then, Cherubim with burning sword stationed at the entrance of the Garden to prevent them from approaching the Tree of Life (Gen 3:24). In listening to the suffering of sinner in the Garden, Our Lord restores man’s hearing, making him capable of the God’s WORD. The Lord is arrested and expelled from the Garden in the place of the sinner. The fiery sword that pre­vents Adam and Eve to approach the Tree of Life now is put down at the command of the Lord. Sinner now can reach out to the Tree of Life. Who can tell the greatness of the mercy of the Lord?

God asked Adam and Eve to show themselves, but they refused to approach Him. Because man refuses to come to the Lord, the Lord himself comes to man. His heart is restless until it rests in us. May our heart be restless, until it rests in Him.

**PONDER**

1. Will you allow Jesus’ gaze to fall upon you, His dear friend? Will you allow Him to see all that you are, even the stains, the wounds, the scars?
2. Will you allow Jesus to place His hand on you and touch you where you are most wounded? Do you believe that He can and will heal you?

**7th Church: Fulfilled**

Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father and he will not provide me at this moment with more than twelve legions of angels? But then how would the scriptures be fulfilled which say that it must come to pass in this way?” At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to seize me? Day after day I sat teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me. But all this has come to pass that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples left him and fled. (Matthew 26: 52-56)

**REFLECTION***—Fr. Scott Sina, Parochial Vicar at St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception*

A common movie trope is the “hero wound.” The hero’s injury typi­cally consists of a dislocated shoulder or a wound to the thigh. May­be also a conveniently routed flow of blood from the forehead. In other words, no significant disfigurement or permanent disability. We need him to heal like new and ride off into the sunset with his leading lady happily ever after.

At the Last Supper, Peter says to Jesus: “Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you.” When the guards come for Je­sus, Peter indeed draws his sword until Jesus tells him to stand down. So Saint Peter was no chicken. Yet just hours later he denies being a disciple of Christ when he is accused in the high priest’s courtyard.

Peter’s problem is that he had fixated on a certain sense of what it would mean to fulfill his promise to Christ. He was willing to fight the guards to the death with swords. But when he saw the full weight of the Jewish legal establishment coming down on Christ, he balked. He didn’t want to be accused in public of heresy, mocked and beaten by his fellow Jews for disloyalty, and possibly handed over to the Ro­mans for crucifixion.

Many Christians imagine that they are willing to endure suffering, persecution, or even martyrdom for the faith. But the problem is that, like Peter, we have romanticized what that will be like. We are prepared to accept a “hero wound” (maybe even a hero’s death) – in other words, one that tidily fits the narratives of our religious, polit­ical, or personal preferences.

But that may not be the real Cross that Jesus sends us. Being Chris­tian doesn’t just mean the possibility of suffering or dying for the faith, it may mean suffering and dying in certain ways or for certain aspects of the faith that are not the ones on which we would choose to make our final stand. We must accept this reality to truly fulfill our vocation in Christ.

**PONDER**

1. Jesus shows full confidence that, despite the evil ahead, the Fa­ther is in control. Do you trust that God desires your happiness and that He will give you fulfillment if you follow Him?
2. Jesus invites you to journey with Him – through the highs and the lows of His Passion and Resurrection. Will you walk with him or will you leave Him and flee?