
SUNDAY

*Woman, behold your
son...behold your mother.*

March 23, 2025

As we begin this 3rd week of
Lent, let's begin by taking
some time to read John
19:23-27.

When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

“Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”

This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said:

“They divided my clothes
among them
and cast lots for my
garment.”

So this is what the soldiers
did.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son,"

and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

John 19:23-27

As we begin this new week,
ask Jesus to be open to what
He wants to show you this
week. Ask Him to help you
see what He wants you to
learn about this 3rd word
from the cross.

MONDAY

*Woman, behold your
son...behold your mother.*

March 24, 2025

It's almost laughable.

While people suffered and
died, while men writhed in
agony inflicted **by** them-

the soldiers gambled for
Jesus' clothes.

It reminds us of the not-actually-historically-accurate saying attributed to Marie Antionette. When people were starving and had no bread, she was said to have remarked in supreme ignorance, "well then let them eat cake!"

We recoil in disgust when we see people so woefully out of touch with suffering.

We wonder, "what has happened to them that they are so unmoved by human pain?"

And then we might be forced to somber self-reflection by the reality that we too have been like these soldiers.

We complain about the price of our produce, willfully ignoring the reality that lower prices for us often come at unlivable wages for others.

Something happens to our hearts when we hear about suffering. We resist it. We want to ignore it. To block it out. Because to face the reality of suffering means we are responsible to be moved by it. To do something.

The soldiers had to make a game out of their compliance with injustice. Maybe it was a coping mechanism.

How do we cope with the injustice so prevalent in our world?

Do we, like the soldiers look
for ways to ignore, look away,
numb ourselves to injustice?

Or will we allow ourselves to
look it in the face, to feel
something, maybe even to do
something when faced with
the pain and suffering of
others?

Today, confess where you are likely to try and numb out or ignore suffering or injustice.

Ask Jesus for His help to lean toward compassion and action, like Him.

TUESDAY

*Woman, behold your
son...behold your mother.*

March 25, 2025

While the soldiers gambled,
Mary stood by in horrified
silence as every mother's
worst fears came true for her.

Her son, dying and in pain.
And she cannot help.

Her friends stood near her,
offering presence in absence
of anything else they could
do.

They stood together, maybe
in disbelief. Maybe
wondering, "how did we get
here?"

The disciple John, who may have been Jesus' cousin stood there too.

I wonder what he was thinking, watching as his friend, his teacher was dying.

"Were we wrong? This isn't what was supposed to happen..."

We have to confess that we too, looking at our circumstances sometimes wonder the same thing.

“Were we wrong to hope in God? This isn’t how I thought this would go...”

*Today, spend some time
telling Jesus about where
you are struggling to see His
plan. Where you are
wondering about what He is
allowing.*

*Experience the gift of a God
who can hold all our doubts
and questions.*

WEDNESDAY

*Woman, behold your
son...behold your mother.*

March 26, 2025

Family.

It's a weighted and
complicated word for many
of us.

For some of us, family is the
place we experienced our
worst wounding.

It is where we learned to be
afraid, distrustful, on guard.

For some of us, family is a good thing. Where we experienced love and grace and belonging. Where we experienced safety.

And for many of us- it's complicated. We have good and painful associations with family. We felt loved, but we also learned to hide. We learned who we were, but also that we had to fend for ourselves.

Throughout Jesus' ministry, it is clear that He has complicated feelings about family too.

As a child, when he goes missing for a few days and his parents are worried sick- he flippantly tells Mary and Joseph that of course He would be at the temple- His Father's house.

(If you're Joseph- does this have the slightest twinge of "you're not my real dad!"?)

Later, as an adult, his mom and siblings come visit him, and he responds with “who are my brothers and mother and sisters?”

He’s making a point about the expansiveness of God’s family, but if I’m Mary, I’d have some feelings about this.

As He preaches, He often
says unsettling things like
that he's come to turn
families against each other!

Not exactly a "family
friendly" message.

As we consider these words from the cross where Jesus seems to be creating a new family, let's take some time to acknowledge to God that our own experiences with family color our ability to participate in the new family He wants for us.

Today, tell Jesus how your family story colors your experience in the church family. Ask for His help to notice these things and for His help healing you so that you can participate more fully in the new family- the Body of Christ- the Church.

THURSDAY

*Woman, behold your
son...behold your mother.*

March 27, 2025

It is so interesting to me that Jesus chose this moment, when He was actively dying on the cross to ask John to care for His mom.

Why didn't he talk with John about this earlier?

“Hey John, you know how I’ve been talking about dying a lot recently and it’s really freaking you guys out?

Yeah, well, I need a favor- when I do die- because yeah, it’s def gonna happen- could you please look out for my mom? Thanks bro.”

Why wait? Why on the cross?
Why at THIS moment? Had
He just forgotten?

Was this like, "Oh shoot!
John, one more thing! I
almost forgot..."?

I wonder if he waited for this moment because He wanted it to be clear that in the darkest nights, in the worst despair, we would find strength in each other.

I wonder if he wanted them to see right then that the Church was his answer to the darkness in the world.

That He was creating
something new. The new
family he'd talked about, the
new command to love, the
new covenant community- it
starts NOW. Even when it
looks like all is lost.

That even in the darkness,
His Church will shine.

For some of us, believing that the Church is God's idea for bringing the hope of Jesus to the world is.... problematic.

We've seen the mess the Church can make, and we have our doubts about how good an idea the Church was.

But a faithful reading of the Gospels shows us that Jesus had always planned to leave His followers, with the power of the Holy Spirit as His great plan to spread salvation over the entire world.

Take some time today to reflect on where you have experienced the gift of God's people at your darkest moments. Thank Him that He has never left His church and that He is still working in and through us, even in the darkness.

FRIDAY

*Woman, behold your
son...behold your mother.*

March 28, 2025

*“Woman, behold your
son...John, behold your
mother.”*

As we've been saying- Jesus started a new family. The apostles write about this and "family" seems to be a primary way the early church understood their relationships with each other.

As I learn about how in Latino culture, the family is a BIG umbrella, a BIG table- it stretches me to think more inclusively about God's family.

I tend to think of “family” as just me, my husband and my kids. Or maybe me, my brothers and my parents. It’s small.

But Latino familia includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins.

In many African cultures, this is true as well. Any older woman who is a friend of the family is called "Aunty". Anyone close to your own age is called "cousin." There is constantly more space at the table. More room for more family to be included. The bias is toward the GROWTH of the family.

How does this thought of the
“ever expanding” family unit
cause you to change how you
think about the church?
About how you make room
for others at the church?

Sometimes we can resist
inviting more people in.
Maybe because they are
people we don't understand.
Maybe because we like "our"
church how it is.

Today, ask God to help your posture toward others to be more like the Latino familia—always expanding, making more room, inviting more to the table. Ask for his help to receive everyone who comes as part of your family in Christ.

SATURDAY

*Woman, behold your
son...behold your mother.*

March 29, 2025

*"We, who once cared only for
those folk who have the same
genetic endowment as us,
now are made to care for
those with whom we have
nothing in common except
Jesus.*

*We keep having that
experience of coming to call
"sister" someone who we
first thought to be just
another threatening stranger.*

*It's one of the gracious,
demanding by-products of
standing at the foot of Jesus'
cross.*

*It's called "the Body of
Christ."*

Look around you now, at these losers who gather at the foot of the cross, people whom you hardly know, much less have much in common with.

*Pray to God for the grace to
be able to see these
strangers as your siblings.
Pray to God that they'll be
given the grace to see you as
a close relative.*

*All of the inadequacies and
problems that you had
growing up in your family are
being healed.*

He who had no conventional family, he who sired no children, is busy forming the largest family the world has ever known.

Welcome home."

*- William H. Willimon,
Thank God It's Friday*
