

WEEKLY MEDITATION



The account of Jesus' temptations in the desert comes at the beginning of Lent. It is a message, a warning, and an inspiration. Lent, as a time of penance and sacrifice, calls us to a new life. The Gospel deals in a personal way with 2 categories of believers.

First with those who after Baptism sin again (that means all of us). This is their opportunity to turn toward a new life. It concerns all who have chosen Christianity, including adult catechumens who, by the decision of the Church and their personal commitment, will receive the sacrament of Christian initiation on Easter.

The Gospel warns all of us that this is the time of real struggle for the Kingdom of God, and it is not surprising if the devil vigorously attacks those who resist him and want to renounce him and his enticements. This week let us pray and implore the help of the Lord to grant us the strength of faith needed to turn from our sins and follow in His footsteps. Jesus has triumphed. The devil has been overcome. The angels come before Jesus to serve Him. We believe that He will send His angels to serve us, to guide us, and to help us in our daily temptations.



We remind you that during this holy season of Lent we will pray the Stations of the Cross every Friday at 7 p.m. in English and every Sunday at 10:30 a.m. in Croatian.

-Fast on Fridays and, if possible, Wednesdays.
-Attend mass as often as possible during the week.

-Today, Sunday, we will view Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of the Christ* as a parish group. All those traveling by bus must meet in front of church by 5:30 p.m. Those going by car should arrive at Loews Webster Place Theater #7, 1471 W. Webster, by 6:35 p.m.

-If there is enough interest, we will organize a parish discussion on the Lenten theme of the passion of Christ and feature a guest speaker. This is an interesting, deep, and central theme of the Christian faith. The film provides an incentive to delve deeper into contemplation of this sacred theme. Please let us know if you are interested in participating in a lecture/discussion.

SECOND COLLECTION for the Archdiocese of Chicago's **Annual Catholic Appeal** will be taken next weekend. The ministries operated by the Pastoral Center are a tangible sign of Christ's loving presence for those who are hurting and need healing, compassion, and comfort. Your generosity makes possible the following ministries: Kolbe House, SPRED, O'Hare and Midway chaplaincies, Fire Dept. chaplaincy, Catholic Office for the Deaf, Campus Ministry programs, and the Respect Life Office that sponsors programs promoting the dignity of life from conception through natural death. This appeal is the one campaign each year to fund these vital agencies. Together we are able to do so much! Please help. Your contribution does a world of good. Thank you for your support.

THOUGHT OF THE WEEK

"Anger is one letter away from danger."

RECOMMENDED READING: *Contemporary Catholics on Traditional Devotions* Edited by James Martin, S.J.; Loyola Press; 160 pages; publisher's price \$11.95, paperback

Each of the book's 19 contributors writes about an area of special meaning (and practice) in his or her life as a Catholic: Christopher J. Ruddy on "The Sacred Heart of Jesus"; Emilie Griffin on "The Angelus"; Daniel J. Harrington, S.J., on *Lectio Divina*; Janice Farnham, R.J.M., on "The Immaculate Heart of Mary"; Sally Cunneen on "The Rosary"; Lawrence S. Cunningham on "The Saints"; William Griffin on "Litanies"; Dianne Bergant, C.S.A., on "Novenas"; and Brian E. Daley, S.J., on "Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament." This book introduces the practice of devotions to a new generation, speaking "to younger Catholics eager to...explore new ways of prayer, and to regain a sense of mystery in their lives." It is our hope that the book achieves that and much more. We recommend it to all of you readers, especially as you walk the journey of Lent in prayer and interior reflection. Keep a copy on your nightstand.

Did You Know?

THE "PASSION" FACTS:

Newmarket Films released *The Passion of the Christ* theatrically in the U.S. on Ash Wednesday, February 25th, 2004.

SOURCES:

The screenplay for *The Passion of the Christ* was adapted by director/producer Mel Gibson in collaboration with Benedict Fitzgerald (*Wise Blood, In Cold Blood, Heart of Darkness, Zelda*) and depicts the last twelve hours of Christ's life on earth. It was adapted from a composite account of The Passion assembled from the four Biblical Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

LANGUAGES:

All the characters in the film are heard speaking the languages they would actually have spoken at the time. This means Aramaic for the Jewish characters, including Christ and his disciples, and "street Latin" for the Romans. Greek, which was commonly spoken among the intellectuals of the period, was not quite as relevant to the story.

LOCATIONS:

The Passion of the Christ was filmed entirely in Italy, primarily in two locations: Matera and Cinecitta Studios. The crucifixion scenes were filmed in a beautiful city of Matera, in the Basilicata region of Southern Italy, near where Pier Paolo Pasolini shot *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* in 1965. Jerusalem was a single mammoth set constructed at the famed Cinecitta Studios on the outskirts of Rome by the famous production designer Francesco Frigeri and set decorator Carlo Gervasi.

This single large complex included the Temple in which Christ's religious tribunal occurs, the courtyard of his several hearings before Pilate's Palace, and the enclosure in which he is beaten and scourged.

THE CREATIVE TEAM:

Gibson asked cinematographer Caleb Deschanel (*The Patriot, The Right Stuff*) to make the movie look like paintings of Italian Baroque artist Caravaggio, whose images are known to have a lifelike glow from sharp contrasts of light and darkness. "I think his work his beautiful," Gibson said of Caravaggio. "It's violent, it's dark, it's spiritual, and it also has an odd whimsey or strangeness to it." Forty percent of the film was shot at night or indoors under wraps in order to get an effect of light fighting its way out of darkness.

The costumes were meticulously researched and hand-crafted by award-winning designer Maurizio Milenotti (*Hamlet, Importance of Being Earnest*) to enhance the overall visual design Gibson wanted for the film with Caravaggio-like shades of brown, black, and beige. Although most of the crew was recruited in Italy (and most of the cast either in Italy or Eastern Europe), the entire special make-up and hair crews, led by Keith Vanderlaan and Greg Cannom (*A Beautiful Mind, Pirates of the Caribbean*), were Hollywood imports. Gibson knew he needed the best make-up technicians in the world to create the uncompromising and often harrowing realism he was after in the scourging and crucifixion scenes. Actor Jim Caviezel endured seven hour make-up sessions daily when shooting the movie's later sequences.

"I really wanted to express the hugeness of the sacrifice, as well as the horror of it... because it is ultimately a story of faith, hope, and love." *Mel Gibson*

"I'm now more afraid of not doing the right thing." *Jim Caviezel (Jesus)*

"Capturing Mary for me was about understanding a way of life, about how someone transcends pain and suffering, and turns it into love." *Maia Morgenstern (Mary)*