

- With today's liturgy we enter Holy Week, our solemn remembrance of all that Jesus suffered to atone for our sins. Over the course of this week, we will see the conspiracy that leads to our Lord's betrayal.
- On Thursday night we will sit with Jesus and His apostles at His last supper, after which we will follow Him to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray with Him as He suffers His most bitter agony.
- Through our liturgies we will watch as our Lord is arrested, imprisoned, unjustly judged and condemned. He will be mercilessly scourged and crowned with thorns amidst bitter mockery. Every imaginable ignominy will be heaped upon Him.
- Our Lord will be stripped of every human comfort, even His clothing, and ultimately Jesus will suffer the humiliation of crucifixion like a common criminal, hanging upon the cross for three agonizing hours until He can breathe no more and dies.
- As we meditate on His suffering and death this week, we must strive humbly to recognize the ways we crucify our Lord by our sins. Yet, at the same time, we must also give thought to our own death. How will *we* die?
- Whether we like it or not, this life has an end. Each of us *will* die, and the only input we will have, the only thing we will get to choose at death, is the state of our soul.
- Either we will die in the state of grace that will bring upon us God's eternal mercy, or we will die in the state of mortal sin that will bring upon us God's eternal wrath.
- In the Christmas Season, we celebrated not only that God came to dwell among us, but that He came to dwell in our souls: to be one with us in this life, and hopefully the next.
- He's not an ephemeral, unreachable, or unknowable God. No, through baptism He is most intimately united with us.
- And He stays so intimately united with us until we sin. For when we sin, we tell our all-loving and all-powerful God that we prefer someone or something else to Him.
- When we commit a venial, a lesser sin, we place obstacles in of our relationship with God, distancing ourselves from this Divine Guest in our souls.
- But when we commit a mortal sin, we expel God from our souls altogether, which is the greatest tragedy that can befall any of us.
- Yet, despite whatever sins we have committed in life, no matter how many times we've expelled God from our souls through mortal sin, He always wants us back. Never can we sin so often or so gravely that Christ will refuse to love us, so great is His love for us.
- This week we will commemorate this powerful love of Jesus, a love that led Jesus to suffer and die for us to redeem us from our sins so that we can live with Him eternally in Heaven.
- Yet this redemption is not automatic; it's not something we can presume. It requires the humble confession of our sins, most especially our mortal sins, and that we repent – that we strive to avoid those sins in the future and even the near occasion of our sins.
- May our faithful and pious celebration of this most holy of weeks gain for us the grace of true contrition and repentance, and an even greater love for our crucified Lord.
- May we persist in His grace throughout this life, and when the time of our own death comes, may we not only be in a state of grace, but fully prepared to be united with Him in the glory of His heavenly kingdom.