

To Know To Believe To Live – Module 6 Official Handout

02.13.21 Version

Developed by Msgr. Michael Clay

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THE PASCHAL MYSTERY, PART I: THE PASSION & DEATH OF JESUS

- I. Setting the Context for Why Jesus Would Suffer and Die on the Cross:
- A. To grasp why Jesus would willingly suffer and die on a cross, we go to the Last Supper Discourse (Teaching) of Jesus found in John's Gospel and consider perhaps Jesus' most significant words that unveil why Jesus is willing to die on a cross.
 - 1. "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. . . . My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." (John 15:13-14, 17).
 - B. Jesus has come to restore a world broken by sin, evil, and hatred to the world God always intended it to be: a world of grace, forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, and love.
 - C. This is how it is in heaven: "No more common colds, no more uncommon cancers. Everyone would have their day every day; there would be no second-class citizens. Prisoners and slaves would be free; hungry people would have plenty; no one would lift a finger to harm another; and we would all be at peace with everyone, even with ourselves."
 - D. This is what Jesus is trying to get us to at the end of our life but also wants to enable us to cultivate, even if incompletely, on earth while we live.
 - E. The cross is what enables us to get there, both in heaven and on earth.
 - F. Discussion Questions:
 - 1. When you imagine heaven, who/what first comes to mind? Describe it.
 - 2. Many people believe they will be reunited with their relatives and friends who have gone before them into eternity. Based on what we are learning about God and God's relationship with and desire for the entire human family, who might also be in heaven whom we might not have thought about in our initial reflection above about heaven?
 - 3. We are called to be collaborators with Christ in bringing God's vision into our world, albeit incompletely. God's plan is not just reserved for heaven. What place does being a collaborator with Christ for the redemption of this world play in your life today? How might it grow?

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II. Why Would Jesus Suffer and Die on the Cross?

- A. To unleash the divine plan, Jesus was willing to die for the sins of everyone because we simply were not up to the challenge despite the efforts of many.
- B. God knew that our human attempts at fixing an increasingly bad situation would need someone who could outlove us all.
- C. God also knew that sin was something we could not overcome by ourselves so Jesus came to set us free.
- D. We are made in the image and likeness of the One who is perfect love. As God's images, we are meant to reflect that to one another. That reflection is what we call holiness.
- E. But here is another truth: we cannot be this holiness without Jesus' help. His willingness to die for us because we are his friends is meant to inspire in us gratitude to Him through our 1) worship of Him and 2) service to others.
- F. Jesus repairs/restores on the cross what we are incapable of repairing/restoring by ourselves so we can be holy as He is holy.
- G. Discussion Questions:
 - 1. How often do you consciously consider how you will live holiness, i.e., reflect God's image and likeness by the witness of your life, in the course of an average week?
 - 2. What would motivate you to be more conscientious about living intentional holiness each day?
 - 3. How has this presentation impacted you in terms of the place sin has on your journey to holiness in your life?

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III. The Cross in the Daily Life of the Christian:

- A. We accept the cross in our daily lives 1) to strengthen our solidarity with Christ as crosses come our way over a lifetime and 2) to continue receiving the grace that still flows from the cross
- B. We place crucifixes around us to remind us continually of this love because we can tend to become amnesiacs about the cross and its meaning; we tend to forget.
- C. Others have yet to become aware of this profound act of love. We keep crucifixes around us to pique people's curiosity so we can tell this story of the greatest act of love known to the human race so others may know, believe, and live it.

IV. Ongoing Reflection:

- A. Reflect on where you are currently in knowing, believing, and living the passion and death of Jesus in your life today AND how you might be invited to take another step forward growing in this area of faith.

V. A Prayer:

Jesus, by this Saving Sign,
bless this listless soul of mine.
Jesus, by Your feet nailed fast,
mend the missteps of my past.
Jesus, with Your riven hands,
bend my will to love's demands.
Jesus, in Your Heart laid bare,
warm my inner coldness there.
Jesus, by Your thorn-crowned head,
still my pride till it is dead.
Jesus, by Your muted tongue,
stay my words that hurt someone.
Jesus, by Your tired eyes,
open mine to faith's surprise.
Jesus, by Your fading breath,
keep me faithful until death.
Yes, Lord, by this Saving Sign,
save this wayward soul of mine.
Amen. -St. Vincent Strambi (1745-1824)

VI. Bibliography/Credits:

"Be Still and Know That I Am God," by Christopher Walker and Sr. Paule Freeburg, DC is used with permission by Oregon Catholic Press.

"How Can It Be All Right When Everything's Wrong?" Lewis Smedes. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992, 151-152

"At the Cross." Chris Tomlin. Used with permission.