
AN UNFORGETTABLE EXAMPLE



Level Three of the family- and parish-based catechetics programme leads us to the heart of God's most beautiful marvels. The earth is our home, a gift of God. Since always, God's fondest wish has been to abide with us. He wants us to enjoy friendship with Him! More than that, He comes to live in us!

THE STONES WILL SHOUT!

Jesus' last week on earth was the most disturbing. We have only to consider his entry into Jerusalem. Jesus needed so much courage to go up to Jerusalem, as he was being spied on from every quarter, and because a plot was being fomented to kill him. However, Jesus had many friends. When the people heard that he was coming to Jerusalem, they ran to greet him as God's Messiah. They praised God in a loud voice, saying: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!" These praises we find in our eucharistic liturgies, which were also acclamations of the angels at the birth of Jesus, and which we sing Christmas night: "*Gloria in excelsis Deo!*" Jesus' friends were so loud in their acclamations that his enemies asked him to tell them to stop. Jesus answered: "If they keep quiet, the very stones will shout!" I remember back, in 1995 when I was part of an 8-person Canadian delegation to Mexico to try to bring an end to the conflict in Chiapas. When we reached the village farthest from Chiapas, and the one most controlled by the military, the entire community greeted us as "messengers of peace" with songs and cheers, incense and flowers. Jesus entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey, acclaimed as a prophet of peace, but he would, sadly, be betrayed, disowned, abandoned, and crucified, shortly after. Would he one day be able to dwell among his own? Jerusalem has not always recognised God's visitations.

MYSTERY OF EVIL

It was a full week for Jesus, with everybody around him. In the daytime he was in the Temple teaching, and nights he would retire to the olive grove to pray and rest. The Passover was quickly approaching, and the enemies of Jesus were seeking ways of doing away with him, but they feared the crowds. However, they found an accomplice to help them: they managed to convince Judas Iscariot to hand over his Master to them. The evangelist Saint Luke writes that "Satan took possession of Judas." How else are we to explain the abominable act that Judas was about to commit? How can we understand this betrayal? Such deeds are found in certain stories of organised crime, but in the case of Jesus who had never stopped preaching about love, and whose only mission was to reveal his Father's infinite love for all humankind, in the case of this Jesus who had lived and taught the Beatitudes, and who had carefully formed his apostles to this, how could it be that one of his apostles turned against him in this way? Evil is something very mysterious; it corrupts the best of human relations. If only it were always possible for us to remain in God's love and in the love of our brothers and sisters!

"PREPARE A FEAST"

Looking back on everything that had taken place on Holy Thursday evening – the washing of the feet, the institution of the Eucharist, and Jesus' final farewell – Robert Lebel composed the beautiful song, *Comme lui* ["Like Him"]: "To know, like him, how to set the table, and like him, to put on an apron, getting up each day and serving with love, like him. To offer the Bread of his Word to those who hunger for happiness, to be to them signs of the Kingdom in the midst of our world. To offer the Bread of his presence to those who yearn to be loved, to be for them signs of hope in the midst of our world. To offer the Bread of his promise to those who hunger for the future, to be for them signs of kindness in the midst of our world. To offer the Bread of every Eucharist to those whose hearts are hungry, to be for them signs of the Gospel in the midst of our world." Jesus not only washed the feet of his disciples, he did more. Knowing that his time had come to leave this world and return to his Father, having loved those who were his own in the world, he loved them to the

end. He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "This is my body given up for you; do this in memory of me." He did the same with the cup, at the end of the meal: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you."

A PROMISE

It was in a speech and in a fervent prayer that Jesus revealed his greatest secret: "If someone loves me, he shall keep my word, my Father will love him, we will come to him and make our dwelling place with him. Whoever lives in me as I live in him, bears much fruit. If you live in me and my words live in you, you can ask whatever you want, and you shall get it. It is my Father's glory that you bear much fruit. This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than to give one's life for one's friends." Let us proclaim the mystery of faith!

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