



**Our Redeemer Lutheran Church**  
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Rev. Dr. John Rickert, Pastor

## **OUR REDEEMER'S VOICE**

### **March 2020**

### **What Are the Stations of the Cross?**

About 2,000 years ago, the Roman Empire stretched across most of Europe (they never did quite get all the British Isle or all of Germany and areas further north). It did include the Balkans (Romania, Yugoslavia, and places like that), the Anatolia Peninsula (modern Turkey) east to the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers (modern Iraq and Kuwait), south through modern Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel, and into and across northern Africa (modern Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco). Rome changed the world – how it governed, how it spoke, how it did business, how it thought, and even what was considered entertainment. The Roman Peace (*Pax Romana*) made travel relatively safe, and therefore the exchange of ideas relatively quick. Who would have thought that the events, transpiring in a troubled province named Palestine, would have an even greater impact on the world than all the glory of Rome? But they did!

Sometime around the year 30 (according to our modern calendar reckoned from the birth of Jesus, not the years as reckoned by Rome), Jesus of Nazareth was put to death on a cross like a common criminal. But Jesus was no ordinary man. He was the incarnate God. His death could have easily been avoided. He could have called down 12 legions of angels for his defense at any moment (Matthew 26:53). But he didn't. Instead, he bore his cross, and in doing so merited salvation for all who receive him. These hours changed history, not just religious history, but all of history. (I recommend the book *How Christianity Changed the World* by Alvin J. Schmidt, if you have any doubt about this.) The hours between the Garden of Gethsemane and the Garden Tomb, when our Lord suffered for our sake, is the focal point of God's activity in history on our behalf.



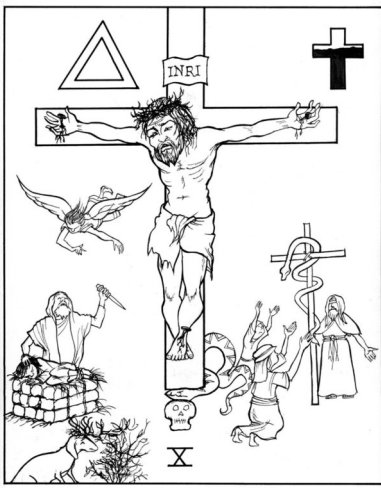
However, we are not to think of these hours in merely historical terms. That is because they are also the focal point of our life in Christ. Consider that the Bible depicts baptism as being baptized into the death and resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:3). Consider that with the Lord's Supper we receive the Body given for us and the Blood shed for us, both of which happened on the cross (Matthew 26:28; Luke 22:19). Consider how our Lord describes the life of Christian discipleship as one of taking up our cross and following Jesus (Mark 8:34). Ponder how Paul once wrote, "For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). It is no surprise that the Gospel of Matthew dedicates seven chapters to the last week of Jesus' life. Mark dedicates five chapters. Luke dedicates over four chapters. John gives over seven chapters to this time in the life of Jesus. We know more about this week in the life of Christ than anything else recorded for us. All of this and more

speaks to the fact that these hours have an ongoing reality for us as Christians. They have an ongoing power to change us, to transform us into the image of Christ (Romans 12:1-2).

It is not surprising at all, then, that the sites where these history-shaping events transpired became sites of special devotion to God. By visiting these places believers have, throughout the centuries, enhanced their feeling of connection to our Lord. They have had their faith strengthened. Even today, trips to the "Holy Land" draw countless "pilgrims" who always seem to report that their faith has been strengthened, that the Bible has been made more alive, and that their connection with Jesus has been rejuvenated.

The first truly famous person to visit the sites of our Lord was Helena, the mother of Emperor Constantine. (Constantine was the emperor who first legalized Christianity.) Helena identified many of the sites made sacred by our Lord's presence, and Constantine had many churches and shrines built in those locations. Most of the sites Helena identified have stood the test of time, and why shouldn't they? She consulted with the local Christians, who had kept alive the events of the life of Jesus. These sites became the focal point of many pilgrims and remained so throughout the centuries.





However, such a trip was mainly for the privileged few, especially before the twentieth century. (Today many far less "privileged" people can make the trip.) Over the centuries, the yearning to walk the "Way of the Cross" (*Via Crucis*) with Jesus on his "Way of Sorrows" (*Via Dolorosa*) was alive in the hearts of many who could not make the trip to Jerusalem. The Bishop of Bologna, in the fifth century, desired to provide his people the opportunity to walk this "Sacred Way" (*Via Sacra*). To provide this opportunity, he had a series of chapels constructed and connected them into a single building at the monastery of San Stefano. These chapels represented different stopping points (stations) along the way to the cross of Jesus. This was a "pilgrimage for the poor." Thus began the "Stations of the Cross" (though that name would not appear until the 1800s). Over the centuries, "stations" were erected everywhere the Church spread, though the number and exact subject matter varied quite a bit. The heart of them, the idea behind them, has always been the same: They provide an opportunity for the individual believer to walk with Christ during his final hours. Such is the thought behind the new stations that are the focus of our Lenten services this year at Our Redeemer. They are a "poor man's" pilgrimage to the sites sanctified by our Lord's presence so many years

ago.

Join us each Wednesday during Lent as we go deeper into the symbolism found in our stations. Then, join us on Wednesday of Holy Week for a Stations of the Cross service. During this special service we will take a spiritual pilgrimage, walking with our Lord Jesus as he faced the greatest challenge of all time.

As with all our worship services, these special services are open to all. Is there someone you would like to bring with you as you travel the *Via Dolorosa*?

Blessings in Christ,  
Pastor John Rickert

## Digging In The Nicene Creed Second Article, Part 10

*And [I believe] in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, **begotten of His Father before all worlds**, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.*



Last month, under the phrase "begotten of His Father before all worlds," we considered the "I Am" statements of Jesus. These phrases, and the very name "I Am," identify Jesus as one with the God of the Old Testament, the only True God. This God is the Creator of all things. The phrase, "begotten of His Father before all worlds," affirms that the Second Person of the Trinity existed before all creation, all time, all angels, all planets, and so on. He is co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The main thrust of the phrase, then, is that the Son is eternal.

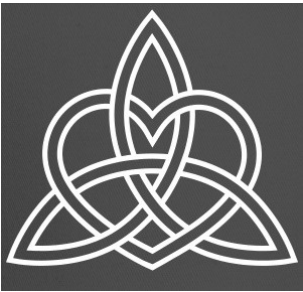


There is an analogy, used by some of the Early Church Fathers, which might help us understand how Jesus can be "begotten" of the Father and yet not be subsequent to the Father in time. In Genesis we have recorded how God created everything. Part of that creation is our sun. Now, coming from the position that God spoke the sun into existence, then one is led to the conclusion that there was never a time when the sun and the radiance of the sun were separated in time. The moment the sun came into existence, so also sunshine came into existence. Neither precedes the other even though the source of the sunshine is the sun. In like manner, though the Son is begotten, nonetheless the Father does not precede the Son.

The Early Church Fathers got this idea from Scriptures like Hebrews 1:3, "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power." Just as the sun and the radiance of the sun cannot be separated in a temporal way, so the Father and the radiance of the Father (the Son) cannot be separated in a temporal way.

One might also point to some of the attributes of God. These attributes are as eternal as God, for they express who he always has been. So, for example, "God is love" (1 John 4:16). Just as there has never been a time when God did

not exist, so there has never been a time when love did not exist. In like fashion, God is Tri-une. Just as there has never been a time when God did not exist, so there has never been a time when the Trinity did not exist and, therefore, the Son. We can do the same with concepts like “wisdom” and “truth.” They are as eternal as God. The Son, who is a person instead of a concept or attribute, is as eternal as the Father, like “love,” “wisdom” and “truth.”



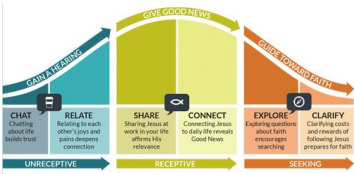
This pretty much concludes what I will say about this mystery. I should wrap up this discussion on this phrase by emphasizing that it is a mystery. We need to be satisfied with that. If we push beyond the truth taught in Scripture, we will push into false doctrine. We confess what we have been given in the Scriptures from God himself, no more. Next month we will start with “God of God.” Until then, “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:14). Amen.



*This newsletter entry will highlight the recent changes in the local Lutheran Hour Ministries program since it has aligned with the work of our Evangelism Committee. The changes will be reflected in our observance of Lutheran Hour Sunday.*

When we received the materials for the Sunday observation, it was focused on the activities of LHM and the Barna Group. At the same time, our Evangelism Committee received an interesting program that is also Barna based. So, it was clearly to our advantage to share the focus and offer suggestions to the congregation based on the material. On February 23<sup>rd</sup> you will receive the handout that describes the Joy of Spiritual Conversation. This is the framework for the proposed effort. The goal is to assist our members to be better prepared to share the good news of salvation every time an opportunity to do so arises.

The foundation of the material lies in what is described as the Eager Conversation Curve. In all of our interactions, there are stages; beginning with a simple chat and progressing to a better relationship; on to sharing of ideas and a connection. As our contact grows we can explore spiritual matters and hopefully clarify the ideas of our contact related to faith.



Your Evangelism Committee will be providing additional material to help us to better understand and find confidence in sharing our faith. We may have had the idea that this sharing must include a solid understanding of all things Biblical, but in reality our sharing of our personal faith life may be the best way to share. The Committee will share some tools that will be of value and are included in these suggestions; **Embrace the Gospel, Apply Spiritual Disciplines, Grasp the Calling, Expect Spiritual Conversations, and Respond Confidently.**



This report is only intended to whet your appetite for what is to come. It will be an interesting and encouraging program that will help each of us to be a better witness to the hope we have in our Lord Jesus Christ and His promised forgiveness and salvation. Keep a watch for the rollout of this very interesting and rewarding effort, probably in the fall.

The fact that both the LHM and Synod have put a focus on the Spiritual Conversation program shows their confidence that it will be an effective tool in our outreach efforts. Let’s all take time to learn and share our faith using these concepts. God Bless the witness of everyone to our world. Arlen D. Besel – Ambassador

**March — Lent:**

Our Lenten observance begins with March 1 and its focus on the fall of man into sin and the temptation of Jesus. The lessons also includes the reminder that the essence of our salvation lies in faith.

New Testament messages extend many of these admonitions to us and to the church of this era.

**THROUGH THE WORSHIP WINDOW**





The Old Testament lessons include the call of Abram and his beginning as the leader of God's people in early history. Included in that period was the story of Moses and striking the rock for water. This action led to his disqualification of leadership in entering the promised land.



In Isaiah we are told of the silence of God as His people were challenged in the desert. Israel had fallen away from their reliance of God and needed to be reminded of His provision for them. The valley of dry bones is an example of the future revival of faith in Israel.

In these Lenten Gospel messages many of the miracles of Jesus were described. These very action were to be the motive for the Jewish leaders to seek a way to kill Jesus.

As Lent ends in this liturgical cycle, the final image is the resurrection of Lazarus. This reminds each of us of the final resurrection we will experience when the Lord comes to lead us all to His heavenly home. Arlen D. Besel– Worship

### Spiritual but Not Religious?

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.* 1John 1:1

Has anyone you know said, "I'm spiritual, not religious"? Do any of your family, friends or coworkers say that they prefer their own private form of spirituality rather than "organized religion"? If so, then the above scripture may be of use to you.

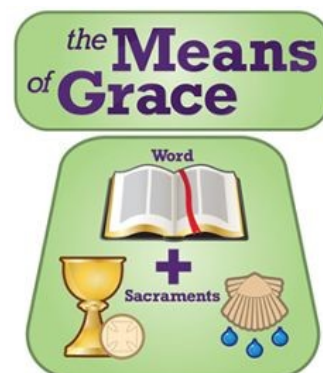


Jesus Christ, fully God and fully man, came in flesh, grew in the flesh, suffered in the flesh, was crucified in the flesh; He walked with real feet, cried real tears, ate real food; He spoke with a real voice, raising the dead, healing the sick, bringing salvation. This flesh-and-blood Jesus did real things that the people could sense; they could see, touch, hear – know on a visceral level – the Word of Life.

Jesus isn't some dead spiritual guide or example; He isn't some make-believe god, made up to dupe the gullible. He is real, tangible, living and active, risen from the dead and living in His bride, the Church – and by "Church" I mean those who trust in His saving work on the cross to save them from sin.

It is no accident that God provides salvation for us in tangible ways. We can see and feel the waters of baptism; we can smell and taste the elements of communion; we can hear the words of eternal life read to us from the Bible. God comes to us with His gifts of justification and sanctification through means, connecting His powerful Word to the ordinary and mundane, that we might know Him and His precious love for us all in simple, humble ways.

Christianity is the true faith in the true God, founded in the real creation. It is also true "spirituality." The next time someone says that they are spiritual but not religious, tell them that you are spiritual, too, *and* religious! The means of grace are spiritual miracles; holy scripture is God's spiritual Word in written form. These things comprise and shape our religious and spiritual life. Invite your family members, friends and coworkers to meet this flesh-and-blood God of love this Lenten season by bringing them to church with you. Kitty Rickert, Evangelism Chair





## LWML – Women in Action

### Giving Thanks

We would like to give a big thank you to Bonnie and Lina for their work labeling the kitchen cabinets and posting directions for use of the commercial coffeemaker. Thanks also to Kitty for making the binder "Helpful Church Information" which will contain church facility information. The binder will kept be in the second drawer in the kitchen. Their time and effort will save time for anyone setting up for a gathering or looking for a trash bag. You are appreciated!

Thank You to Kathy O'Malley for donating her talents for the Pet Portrait Auction. And thank you to Laurel Pearson who won with the highest bid. The auction funds will be sent to support Kate Phillips's mission in Dominican Republic. You are appreciated!



Thank You to all for your donations to the December Undie Sunday and clothing drive for Orphan Grain Train. It was a success! Ruth had a carload of donations to take to the warehouse. You are appreciated!



Autumn Auction - What are your hobbies? Have you been blessed with the talent to crochet, knit, quilt, paint, work wood, sculpt, make jewelry, up-cycle, take photos, bake or decorate cakes? LWML would like you to consider using your hobbies and talents to create an item for our fall fundraising auction to support our missionary Kate Phillips. Unique, gently used items will also be considered for the auction. If you have a handmade/homemade item you'd like to donate for the auction, please email or leave a message with Kitty. More information to come...

"Souper" Sunday - April 5

Next meeting - May 2: At this meeting we will be making "Little Dresses for Haiti" – essentially a sundress made from a pillowcase. So, please bring pillowcases (anything that will make cute dresses), double bias tape (or scrap material we can cut on the bias to make the tape ourselves), ribbons, buttons or anything else that we can use to adorn these dresses. Bring friends, neighbors, family members & let's all use our hands for good works to glorify God!

### Lenten Schedule

Wed	2/26	Ash Wed	Stations of the Cross—#1-2	Supper at 5:30 pm, Worship at 7:00 pm
Wed	3/4	Lent 2	Stations of the Cross—#3-5	Worship at 5:30 pm
Wed	3/11	Lent 3	Stations of the Cross—#6-8	Worship at 5:30 pm
Wed	3/18	Lent 4	Stations of the Cross—#9-10	Worship at 5:30 pm
Wed	3/25	Lent 5	Stations of the Cross—#11-12	Worship at 5:30 pm
Wed	4/1	Lent 6	Stations of the Cross—#13-14	Worship at 5:30 pm
Wed	4/8	Holy Week	Stations of the Cross Service	Worship at 5:30 pm
Thu	4/9	Maundy Thu	Communion Service	Worship at 7:00 pm
Fri	4/10	Good Fri	Tenebrae Service	Worship at 7:00 pm



### Flowers

Please sign up for altar flowers to beautify

our sanctuary on Sundays.

### March Birthdays

12 Scott Kruelle  
13 Carl Kruelle  
13 Erika Bates  
25 Donald Hartwig



*If we missed your special day, please call or email the church office with your info so we can celebrate with you! (302) 737-6176; secretary.orlcde@outlook.com*

## MARCH BIBLE READINGS

- 1**     Isaiah 64:1-9  
Numbers 16-18
- 2**     Psalm 85  
Numbers 19-21
- 3**     Psalm 86  
Numbers 22-24
- 4**     Psalm 87  
Numbers 25-27
- 5**     Psalm 88  
Numbers 28-30
- 6**     Psalm 89  
Numbers 31-33
- 7**     Psalm 90  
Numbers 34-36
- 8**     Psalm 91  
Deuteronomy 1-3
- 9**     Psalm 92  
Deuteronomy 4-6
- 10**   Psalm 93  
Deuteronomy 7-9
- 11**   Psalm 94  
Deuteronomy 10-12
- 12**   Psalm 95  
Deuteronomy 13-15
- 13**   Psalm 96  
Deuteronomy 16-18
- 14**   Psalm 97  
Deuteronomy 19-21
- 15**   Psalm 98  
Deuteronomy 22-24



- 16**   Psalm 99  
Deuteronomy 25-27
- 17**   Psalm 100  
Deuteronomy 28-30
- 18**   Psalm 101  
Deuteronomy 31-34
- 19**   Psalm 102  
Luke 1
- 20**   Psalm 103  
Luke 2-3
- 21**   Psalm 104  
Luke 4-5
- 22**   Psalm 105  
Luke 6-7
- 23**   Psalm 106  
Luke 8-9
- 24**   Psalm 107  
Luke 10-11
- 25**   Psalm 108  
Luke 12-13
- 26**   Psalm 109  
Luke 14-15
- 27**   Psalm 110  
Luke 16-17
- 28**   Psalm 111  
Luke 18-19
- 29**   Psalm 112  
Luke 20-21
- 30**   Psalm 113  
Luke 22
- 31**   Isaiah 64:1-9  
Luke 23-24