

# The Light of the Cross

Mt. 26:14 – 27:66



## The 7 lights of Easter

### THE LIGHT OF TESTING

Mt. 4:1-11

1st Sunday of Lent

### THE LIGHT OF LISTENING

Mt. 17:1-9

2st Sunday of Lent

### THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

Jn 4:5-42

3rd Sunday of Lent

### THE LIGHT OF FAITH

Jn. 9:1-41

4th Sunday of Lent

### THE LIGHT OF THE MASTER

Jn. 11:1-45

5th Sunday of Lent



### THE LIGHT OF THE CROSS

Mt. 26:14 – 27:66

Palm Sunday

### THE LIGHT OF EASTER

Jn. 20:1-9

Easter Sunday

We left Bethany so as to reach Jerusalem in time to celebrate the Passover, which is only two days away! In this period, the Holy City is like a mother welcoming her children, who flock toward her from every corner of Palestine, dancing and singing the Psalms and other inspired songs along the way. Everyone is headed toward the unifying center, the place to which David brought the Ark of the Covenant and where Solomon built a Temple. We make this pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year. On Passover, we offer God a beautiful lamb and at sunset, during the paschal meal, we savor once again the joy and salvation linked to this fundamental episode in our story of liberation.

In fact, our ancestors were not the only ones who stood on the shore of the Red Sea and physically crossed it. Each one of us also made that “crossing” so as to die to service of Pharaoh and rise to service of the Lord. Jesus often explained to us the profound meaning of the Passover. This year however he gave us some very upsetting news: “You know that in two days’ time it will be Passover, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified” (Mt. 26:1-2). The Master had already made us realize that in a short time everyone would be against him. Terrified by the consequences of this, we weren’t able to remain beside him and love him to the very end. We betrayed him, denied him, abandoned him. In exchange, he allowed himself to be maltreated, humiliated, and crucified. And he did this without offering any resistance, without opening his mouth, without blaming anyone. He was like a docile lamb being led to the slaughter. At the witness of this love, the very earth trembled. The love of Jesus opened tombs and reached out to embrace his crucifiers. Before the “spectacle” of the cross, the centurion and soldiers, men of violence and war, acknowledged his identity (cf. Lk. 23:48).

This is how the light of the Cross turned the destiny of the world upside down. We, the beloved disciples of Jesus, fled the scene, insisting over and over again that we did not know him. Instead his oppressors, those farthest away from him, heretics and delinquents were courageous enough to raise their eyes to Mercy Incarnate and recognize this man, pierced by a lance, as *the Son of God*. And in the end, it was some of the soldiers who paradoxically safeguarded Jesus (cf. Mt. 27:54: the Greek verb *tereo*, used for both the soldiers and for Mary of Nazareth, signifies a “safeguarding” of the words and events concerning Jesus). After serving as instruments through which the authors of evil physically accomplished their goal, the centurion and soldiers ironically became “guardians” of the Word—the first and unexpected fruits of the new creation that Jesus initiated through the gift of his life on the “cursed” wood of the Cross.

### Prayer

*Father,  
give us a heart  
that safeguards the light of your Cross,  
which proclaims to everyone  
that nothing can ever separate us  
from the infinite love of Jesus,  
your Son and our Lord. Amen.*