

Readings for Easter

**From the Gospel of Mark
and the Heavenly Doctrine**



Day 1: February 24

Readings:

And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus was going before them; and they were astonished; and as they followed, they feared. And taking again the twelve, He began to say to them what was going to happen to Him: “Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered up to the chief priests and the scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him up to the Gentiles; and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again.” (Mark 10:32-34)

That “the Son of man” signifies the Lord in respect to the Word, was the reason why the prophets also were called sons of man. ... The reason the Lord then called Himself “the Son of man,” is that He suffered Himself to be treated in the same way as they had treated the Word. (*Doctrine of the Lord* 28, 24)

Reflection:

Jesus predicted his mockery and death because the church had already mistreated and perverted the truths of the Word. Have you ever misused the Word to justify or excuse your faults?

Day 2: February 25

Readings:

And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come to Him, saying, Teacher, we will that Thou should do for us whatever we ask. And He said to them, What do you will that I should do for you? And they said to Him, Give unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory. But Jesus said to them, You know not what you ask. Can you drink the cup which I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they say to Him, We can. But Jesus said to them, You shall indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism that I am baptized with, you shall be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left hand is not Mine to give, but for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard, they began to be indignant with James and John. But Jesus calling them to Him, says to them, You know that they who are thought to rule the nations exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you; but whoever wills to be great among you shall be your minister; and whoever of you wills to be the first shall be the servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give His soul a ransom for many. (Mark 10:35-45)

In all His combats of temptations the Lord never fought from the love of self, or for Himself, but for all in the universe, consequently, not that He might become the greatest in heaven, for this is contrary to the Divine Love, and scarcely even that He might be the least; but only that all others might become something, and be saved. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1812.2)

Reflection:

When we start to follow the Lord, we can easily fall into thinking that we are more worthy than others. The Lord showed us an example of serving. Are you following the Lord for merit or from a love of serving what is good and true?

Day 3: February 26

Readings:

And they come to Jericho; and as He goes out of Jericho with His disciples and a considerable crowd, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat along the way begging. And having heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Son of David, Jesus, have mercy on me! And many rebuked him that he should be silent; but he cried out much more, Son of David, have mercy on me! And Jesus, standing, said for him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying to him, Have confidence, arise; He calls thee. And he, casting away his garment and standing up, came to Jesus. And Jesus answering says to him, What will thou that I should do unto thee? And the blind man said to Him, Rabboni, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said to him, Go, thy faith has saved thee. And straightway he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. (Mark 10:46-52)

Believing in [Jesus] means having confidence that He is the Saviour; and since only those who lead good lives can have such confidence, this too is meant by believing in Him. The Lord says this in John's gospel: "This is the will of the Father, that everyone who believes in the Son should have everlasting life." John 6:40. (*True Christian Religion* 2.3)

Reflection:

When Jesus was in the world, He taught the truth and healed people. The healing was often conditioned on the person's faith. Being blind means not seeing the truth (Arcana Coelestia 2383). Having faith in the Lord means hearing and obeying His truth. Think about an area in your life where you need the Lord's help. Watch for how the Lord's truths in this gospel might be healing your blindness.

Day 4: February 27

Readings:

And when they drew near unto Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sends out two of His disciples, and says to them, Go into the village opposite you; and straightaway going into it, you shall find a colt tied, on which no man has sat; having loosed him, bring him. And if anyone say to you, Why are you doing this? say ye that the Lord has need of him; and straightaway he will send him here. And they went and found the colt tied at the door outside, where two ways met; and they loose him. And some of those who stood there said to them, What do you do, loosing the colt? And they said to them as Jesus had commanded; and they let them go. (Mark 11:1-6)

To “ride upon a donkey” was a sign that the natural was made subordinate; and to “ride upon a colt the son of a she-donkey” was a sign that the rational was made subordinate.... From this their signification... it pleased the Lord to do this.... The reason of the representation was that the natural man ought to serve the rational, and this [in turn] the spiritual, this [in turn] the celestial, and this [in turn] the Lord: such is the order of subordination. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1781.8-9)

Reflection:

The symbolism of the Lord riding on a donkey is that the human rational should serve the Lord. Submitting the rational to the Lord means subordinating our wants and ideas about what is right, to the Lord. What is an area where you could submit your life to the Lord?

Day 5: February 28

Readings:

And they led the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on it; and He sat upon it. And many spread their garments in the way; and others cut branches from the trees, and spread them in the way. And they who went before, and they who followed, cried, saying, Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David, who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest! (Mark 11:7-10)

By the disciples putting their garments on the donkey and her colt, was represented that truths in the whole complex were submitted to the Lord as the Highest Judge and King; for the disciples represented the church of the Lord in respect to its truths and goods, and their garments represented the truths themselves. The like was represented by the multitude strewing their garments in the way, and also branches of trees. The reason why they strewed them in the way was that by “a way” is signified the truth whereby the man of the church is led. (*Arcana Coelestia* 9212.6)

Reflection:

Laying garments and palm branches in the way for the Lord, again symbolizes serving the Lord. And this time, that truths when subordinated to the Lord, lead the way to heaven. Was there a time where you felt the Lord leading you directly by His truths from the Word?

Day 6: March 1

Readings:

And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple; and when He had looked around at all things, and already the eventide was come, He went out to Bethany with the twelve. And on the next day, when they were coming out from Bethany, He was hungry; and seeing a fig tree far off having leaves, He came, if perhaps He might find anything on it; and coming to it, He found nothing except leaves; for it was not the time of figs. And Jesus answering said to it, Let no one eat fruit of thee hereafter for an age. And His disciples heard. (Mark 11:11-14)

This fig-tree there was meant the Jewish Church, in which there was no longer anything of natural good; and the religious teaching or truth that was preserved in it, are the “leaves;” for a vastated church is such that it knows truth, but is not willing to understand it. Similar are those who say that they know truth or the things of faith, yet have nothing of the good of charity: they are only fig-leaves, and they wither away. (*Arcana Coelestia* 885.2)

Reflection:

The Lord many times in the Gospel speaks of bearing fruit as a symbol of doing good. Knowing the truth but not living by it is being a house built on sand, or a fig tree with leaves but no fruit.

“By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” (John 15:8)

Day 7: March 2

Readings:

And they came into Jerusalem; and having entered into the temple, Jesus began to cast out those who sold and bought in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves; and would not let anyone carry a vessel through the temple. And He taught, saying to them, Is it not written, My house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it a cave of robbers. And the scribes and the chief priests heard, and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, for all the crowd wondered over His teaching. (Mark 11:15-18)

“Those that sold and bought” here signify those who make gain for themselves out of holy things...They made the temple “a den of thieves,” “thieves” meaning those who pillage the truths and goods of the church, and thus make to themselves gain. (Apocalypse Explained 840.4)

In the Word according to the appearance, that Jehovah or the Lord is angry, punishes, condemns, casts into hell; when yet it is those who are in evil who do this to themselves, and thereby bring upon themselves the evil of punishment; for in the other life the evil of punishment and the evil of guilt are conjoined. (*Arcana Coelestia* 7344)

Reflection:

When we do evil, the truth can feel hurtful and condemning. The Lord uses the truth to separate the evil from the good. Do you want to choose to identify with the evil or with the good?

Day 8: March 3

Readings:

And when it was evening, He went out of the city. And in the morning, as they went by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter remembering says to Him, Rabbi, see, the fig tree which Thou did curse is dried up. And Jesus answering says to them, “Have the faith of God. For amen I say to you, that whoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou taken up, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he says shall come to pass, he shall have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, All things whatever you ask for, having prayed, believe that you shall receive, and it shall be done to you. And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, that your Father also who is in the heavens may forgive you your trespasses. But if you forgive not, neither will your Father who is in the heavens forgive your trespasses.” (Mark 11:19-26)

By these words is described the power of those who are in the Lord; these do not will anything, and so do not ask anything, but from the Lord, and whatsoever they will and ask from the Lord, the same is done... such power have the angels in heaven, that if they only will a thing, they obtain it; but yet they do not will anything but what is of use, and this they will as if from themselves, but still from the Lord. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 951.2)

Reflection:

To have faith in the Lord and ask for something in His name does not mean a magical spell to get whatever we want. Real faith trusts in His will, so we only ask the Lord for heavenly and eternal blessings, not earthly treasures, and pray “Thy Will be done”. What are heavenly treasures it is safe to ask the Lord for?

Day 9: March 4

Readings:

And they come again to Jerusalem; and as He is walking in the temple, there come to Him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, and say to Him, By what authority do Thou these things? And who gave Thee this authority to do these things? But Jesus answering said to them, I will also ask you one thing, and answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or from men? Answer Me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; He will say, Why then did you not believe him? But if we shall say, From men—they feared the people, for all held that John was truly a prophet. And they answering said to Jesus, We know not. And Jesus answering says to them, Neither do I say to you with what authority I do these things. (Mark 11:27-33)

John the Baptist, who was sent beforehand to prepare people for the church the Lord was to found, preached repentance at the same time as he was baptizing. His baptism was therefore called a baptism of repentance, because baptism means spiritual washing, or being cleansed from sins. He did this in the Jordan, because the Jordan meant being brought into the church, since it was the first boundary of the land of Canaan, which was where the church was. (*True Christian Religion* 510.2)

Reflection:

The Pharisees did not want to listen to John because he called them to repent. Jesus too taught that repentance was the start of becoming a Christian. Repentance can be hard because when we look into all our faults it can be overwhelming. The Lord says start small, pick one thing to work on doing better. What is one unkind or selfish behavior you can start to change?

Day 10: March 5

Readings:

And He began to say to them in parables, A man planted a vineyard, and placed a hedge around it, and dug a wine vat, and built a tower, and let it out to farmers, and went abroad. And at the time he sent to the farmers a servant, that he might receive from the farmers of the fruit of the vineyard. But they, having taken him, beat him, and sent him out empty. And again he sent out to them another servant, and these having stoned him, they wounded him in the head, and sent him out dishonored. And again he sent out another, and him they killed, and many others, indeed beating some, and killing some. Therefore having yet one son, his beloved, he sent him also to them last, saying, They will have respect for my son. But those farmers said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours. And having taken him, they killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What then shall the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the farmers, and will give the vineyard to others. (Mark 12:1-9)

The “vineyard which the man planted,” signifies the church that is in truths; the “servants whom he sent thrice,” mean the Word given them through Moses and the prophets...”The beloved son” means the Lord in respect to Divine truth, who is therefore called also the Word; “they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him” signifies killing not only the Lord, but also all Divine truth from Him (*Apocalypse Explained* 315.22)

Reflection:

We are also the vineyard keepers in the sense that we have been given access to the truths of the Word in the church. If we use the Word for selfish purposes, or even just ignore and neglect the Word, we are not good stewards. How do we give the Lord the fruit of the vineyard?

Day 11: March 6

Readings:

Have you not read this Scripture: The stone which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? And they sought to take hold of Him, and they feared the crowd, for they knew that He had said the parable to them; and leaving Him, they went away. (Mark 12:10-12)

He is despised and forsaken of men; a Man of pains, and knowing sickness; and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we thought nothing of Him. Surely our sicknesses He has carried; and our pains, He has borne the burden of them; and we reckoned Him plagued, smitten of God, and afflicted. (Isaiah 53:3-4)

The Lord glorified His Human by combats against the hells and at the same time by continual victories over them. The last combat and victory was on the cross; wherefore He then fully glorified Himself. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10655.2)

Reflection:

The Lord bearing our sins means that Jesus faced and defeated every sin in His human heredity (Apocalypse Revealed 472.2). Because of this our sins are not taken away, but they are defeated, and if we ask the Lord for the power to resist them, He will give us His strength to resist and fight against those hells.

Day 12: March 7

Readings:

And they send to Him some of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch Him in His word. And coming, they say to Him, Teacher, we know that Thou art true, and care for no one; for Thou look not to the face of men, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it permitted to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give? But He, seeing their hypocrisy, said to them, Why do you tempt Me? Bring Me a denarius, that I may see it. And they brought it. And He says to them, Whose is this image and inscription? And they said to Him, Caesar's. And Jesus answering said to them, Render the things of Caesar unto Caesar, and the things of God unto God. And they marveled at Him. (Mark 12:13-17)

To receive the life of heaven a man must needs live in the world and engage in the duties and employments there, and by means of a moral and civil life receive the spiritual life... The spiritual man ought to live in like manner, and can do so as easily as the natural man can, with this difference only, that the spiritual man believes in the Divine, and acts honestly and justly, not solely because so to act is in accord with civil and moral laws, but also because it is in accord with Divine laws. (*Heaven and Hell* 528, 530)

Reflection:

To be a good Christian, we should love our country. Being a conscientious citizen does not take away from our love for the Lord and in fact it supports it. Still, that does not mean civil life is more important than spiritual life. Do you see conflict between following the Lord's laws and the Civil laws?

Day 13: March 8

Readings:

And the Sadducees come to Him, who say that there is no resurrection; and they asked Him, saying, Teacher, Moses wrote to us that if the brother of anyone die, and leave a wife, and leave no children, his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed to his brother. Now there were seven brothers; and the first took a woman, and dying left no seed. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed; and likewise the third. And the seven took her, and left no seed; last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall have risen again, whose wife shall she be of them? For the seven had her as a wife. And Jesus answering said to them, Do you not therefore go astray, not having known the Scriptures, nor the power of God? For when they shall have risen again from the dead, they neither wed, nor are given to be wed, but are as the angels who are in the heavens. (Mark 12:18-25)

[Jesus] taught that people are not given in marriage in heaven by saying that those who are held worthy to attain the second age neither marry nor are given in marriage. The only kind of marriage meant here is spiritual marriage, and this clearly appears from the words that immediately follow, that they cannot die any more because they are like the angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. By spiritual marriage, conjunction with the Lord is meant, and this is achieved on earth. And when it has been achieved on earth, it has also been achieved in heaven. (*Conjugal Love* 41.2)

Male and female were created to be the very image of the marriage between good and truth. This is because the male was created to be an expression of the understanding of truth, thus a picture of truth, and the female was created to be an expression of the will of good, thus a picture of good, and implanted in both from their inmost beings is an inclination to conjunction into one. (*Conjugal Love* 100)

Reflection:

In the ancient world, among the Children of Israel, marriages were seen as legal contracts for the sake of producing heirs, not loving, and certainly not spiritual relationships. In contrast, there is an idea of marriage from the beginning of Genesis that shows us male and female in the image of God and one flesh. Angels in heaven are a more perfect image and likeness of God, so male and female together in one flesh, are one angel.

Day 14: March 9

Readings:

But respecting the dead, that they are already risen, have you not read in the Book of Moses, how in the bramble God said to him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living; you therefore do err much. (Mark 12:26-27)

The Lord's Divine Providence Has as its Goal, A Heaven from the Human Race. Heaven does not consist of any angels created such from the beginning, and hell does not originate from some devil who was created an angel of light and cast down from heaven. Rather, both heaven and hell arise from the human race - heaven from people who are motivated by a love of good and a consequent understanding of truth, and hell from people who are caught up in a love of evil and a consequent understanding of falsity. (*Divine Providence* 27)

Reflection:

It is the Lord's plan that all people enter heaven. Heaven is heaven because all people there love the Lord, and are in His love which is toward all people. But for people who reject that love and choose evil instead, the Lord allows them to be in hell.

Day 15: March 10

Readings:

And one of the scribes came, having heard them disputing and seeing that He had answered them well, asked Him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord is one; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God out of thy whole heart, and out of thy whole soul, and out of thy whole mind, and out of thy whole strength; this is the first commandment; and the second is like it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:28-31)

These are the general principles of all religions, by which everyone can be saved: To acknowledge God, and to refrain from doing evil because it is against God...The Lord provides that there shall be some religion nearly everywhere, and that there shall be these two things in every religion. The Lord also provides that every one who acknowledges God and refrains from doing evil because it is against God should have a place in heaven. For heaven in the complex resembles a single man, whose life or soul is the Lord. (*Divine Providence* 326.9)

Reflection:

All real religions teach the two great commandments. The Ten Commandments are an expansion of what we must do to genuinely love the Lord and our neighbor. How easy is it to actually love someone as much as ourselves?

Day 16: March 11

Readings:

And the scribe said to Him, Well spoken, Teacher. Thou have said the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He; and to love Him out of the whole heart, and out of the whole understanding, and out of the whole soul, and out of the whole strength, and to love one's neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifice. And Jesus seeing him, that he answered discreetly, said to him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no one dared question Him any longer. (Mark 12:32-34)

The apostles [those sent] were called such from their having been sent to teach and to preach the Gospel...so to teach the truths of the church, by which the Lord is known and the kingdom of God is brought near. The kingdom of God on the earth is the church. From this it is evident what is meant by "apostles" in the spiritual sense of the Word, namely, not the twelve apostles who were sent by the Lord to teach concerning Him and His kingdom, but all who are in the truths of the church. (*Apocalypse Explained* 100.2)

Reflection:

Most of the scribes and Pharisees were not truly part of the church. A few of them were able to recognize Jesus as the Lord and the truth He was teaching. We are in the church and even "apostles" if we learn and share the truths of the church.

Day 17: March 12

Readings:

And answering, Jesus said, teaching in the temple, How do the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David? For David himself said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I put Thine enemies as a footstool of Thy feet. David therefore himself calls Him Lord; and whence is He his son? And the numerous crowd heard Him with pleasure. (Mark 12:35-37)

I was once allowed to speak with Mary the mother of Jesus. She happened to be passing, and appeared in heaven above my head, dressed in white garments that looked like silk. Then she paused for a moment to say that she had been the Lord's mother, and He was born to her, but became God putting off everything human He had from her, and she therefore worships Him as her God, and she did not want anyone to acknowledge Him as her Son, because all the Divine is in Him. (*True Christian Religion* 102.3)

Reflection:

In the Word, Jesus is called the Son of David, and by tradition He is called the son of Mary. But it is important to understand that Jesus is God and these human connections were chosen for their symbolism. David for the symbolism of royalty which is Divine Truth and Judgement. Mary for her innocent willingness to serve when called on. No human being has a special claim on the Lord. We can all have this connection to the extent we embody these qualities.

Day 18: March 13

Readings:

And He said to them in His teaching, Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk about in robes, and desire greetings in the marketplaces, and the first seats in synagogues, and the first places to recline at suppers; who eat up widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; these shall receive all the more judgment. And Jesus sat opposite the treasury, and beheld how the crowd cast bronze into the treasury; and many who were rich cast in much. And there came one poor widow, and cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And having called for His disciples, He says to them, Amen I say to you that this poor widow has cast more in than all they who have cast into the treasury; but she from what she lacks did cast in all that she had, even her whole living. (Mark 12:38-43)

Those who know anything of the spiritual sense of the Word... know that heaven is for all who live a life of faith and love, whether rich or poor... man is not shut out of heaven on account of his wealth, nor received into heaven on account of his poverty. (*Heaven and Hell* 357)

Reflection:

We are not going to get into, or be kept out of heaven because of external circumstances like being wealthy or poor. We are judged by what we do with what we are given. Have you been envious of other people for the gifts they have been given, and discontent with your own gifts? Or have you been content and done the best with whatever you are given?

Day 19: March 14

Readings:

And as He went out from the temple, one of His disciples says to Him, Teacher, see what manner of stones and what manner of buildings are here! And Jesus answering said to him, See thou these great buildings? There shall not be left a stone on a stone, which shall not be undone. And as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him by themselves, Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? And Jesus answering them began to say, Look, unless anyone deceives you; for many shall come in My name, saying, I am. And they shall deceive many. And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not alarmed; for it must be; but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in various places, and there shall be famines and disturbances; these are the beginnings of griefs. (Mark 13:1-8)

There are two evil religious principles into which every church in course of time degenerates, one that adulterates its goods, and the other that falsifies its truths. That which adulterates the goods of the church springs from the love of rule, and that which falsifies the truths of the church springs from the conceit of self-intelligence. (*Doctrine of Faith* 49)

Reflection:

Jesus spoke about the destruction of the Temple as a parable of the spiritual destruction of the church. All churches, because they are made up of people, are subject to corruption. Can you times where you have let conceit in your own ideas, or your desire to control others interfere with being part of the Lord's church?

Day 20: March 15

Readings:

But look out for yourselves; for they shall deliver you up to councils and to synagogues; you shall be beaten, and shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them. And the gospel must first be preached among all nations. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, be not anxious beforehand what you shall speak, neither do ye premeditate; but whatever shall be given you in that same hour, that speak ye; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. And a brother shall deliver up a brother to death, and a father a child; and children shall rise up against parents, and shall put them to death. And you shall be hated by all on account of My name; but he who shall endure to the end, this one shall be saved. Mark 13:9-13

The evil in the world of spirits [evil people who have recently died] continually desire to kill; but because there they cannot do this as to the body, they continually desire to do it as to the soul; and since they are not able to do this, they burn with such hatred against them, that nothing delights them more than to do evil to them. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 325.4)

Reflection:

Evil spirits cannot directly harm our bodies or our souls but they can indirectly harm our souls. Betrayal by family members means that we are betrayed by our own evil tendencies. Parts of our own nature are at odds and even hate the things from the Lord that we learn and try to follow. It can be hard to let go of our old ideas of what will make us happy, but can we trust the Lord and endure?

Day 21: March 16

Readings:

And when you shall see the abomination of the desolation declared by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, let him who reads consider; then let those who are in Judea flee into the mountains, and let him who is on the housetop not step down into the house, neither enter to take up anything out of his house, and let him who is in the field not turn back again to take his garment. But woe to those who have in the womb, and to those who nurse, in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. For those days shall be an affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, neither shall be. And except the Lord had shortened the days, all flesh whatever would not have been saved; but for the sake of the chosen, whom He has chosen, He has shortened the days. (Mark 13:14-20)

The “abomination of desolation” denotes the state of the church when there is no love and no charity, for when these are desolated, abominable things predominate. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2454.4)

Reflection:

Returning into the house means a spiritual relapse. It is when someone who has been living a good life turns back from that life to old evils, or even to question the truths that had been the basis of belief (Arcana Coelestia 10184.6). Are we looking back with longing to our old evils like Lot’s wife?

Day 22: March 17

Readings:

And then if anyone shall say to you, Behold, here is Christ! or, Behold, there! believe not; for false christs and false prophets shall arise, and shall show signs and miracles, to seduce, if possible, even the chosen. And look; behold, I have foretold you all things. But in those days, after that affliction, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall be falling, and the powers that are in the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with much power and glory. And then He shall send His angels, and shall gather together His chosen from the four winds, from the end of the earth up to the end of heaven. (Mark 13:21-27)

“The sun shall be darkened,” signifies that there is no longer any love and charity; “the moon shall not give her light,” signifies that there is no longer any intelligence and faith. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 27)

“Behold He cometh with the clouds of heaven,” signifies that the Lord will reveal Himself in the literal sense of the Word, and will open its spiritual sense in the end of the church. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 24)

Reflection:

All churches are made up of people, and so are subject to corruptions. The warning of false christs and prophets, and darkness, are when charity and faith are lost due to people misusing the truth to support their own agendas. The Lord's Second Coming is the revelation of the internal sense of the Word. When you read the Word the darkness or the glory more prevalent for you? Do you feel the Lord's presence when reading in the Word?

Day 23: March 18

Readings:

And learn the parable from the fig tree: When its branch is already become tender, and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know ye that it is near, even at the doors. Amen I say to you, that this generation shall not pass away until all these things be done. The heaven and the earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away. But concerning that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels who are in heaven, nor the Son, except the Father. Look ye, be sleepless and pray; for you know not when the time is. It is as a man taking a far journey, leaving his house, and giving authority to his servants, and to every one his work; and he commanded the doorkeeper to watch. Watch ye therefore, for you know not when the Lord of the house comes, at evening, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning; unless coming suddenly, He find you sleeping. But what I say to you, I say to all: Watch. (Mark 13:28-37)

Thou shalt not know in what hour I will come upon thee,” means not only that one is ignorant of the time of death but also of the state of life at that time which will continue to eternity; for such as the state of man’s past life is, even to the end, such he remains to eternity. (*Apocalypse Explained* 194)

“But of that day and hour no one knows” signifies the state of the church at that time as to goods and truths, that it would not appear to anyone, neither on earth nor in heaven.... “Not the angels of the heavens, but My Father only;” signifies that heaven does not know the state of the church as to good and truth specifically, but the Lord alone, and also when that state of the church will come.... The Divine Good in the Lord is what is called the “Father,” and the Divine Truth from the Divine Good “the Son,” and therefore they who believe that the Father is one and the Son another, and who separate them from each other, do not understand the Scriptures. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4334)

Reflection:

Many people are afraid of the end-times and think of the Lord as an angry father looking to catch us misbehaving and punish us. In the New Church we are taught that the Second coming has happened, and we do not need to be afraid. Still, we should feel a sense of urgency to start right now being the kind of person we want to be to eternity.

Day 24: March 19

Readings:

And in two days was the Passover and the feast with unleavened bread; and the chief priests and the scribes sought how, taking hold of Him with deceit, they might kill Him. But they said, Not in the festival, unless there be an uproar of the people. And when He was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He reclined, there came a woman having an alabaster vessel of ointment of very precious liquid spikenard; and having broken apart the alabaster vessel, she poured it on His head. And there were some who were indignant within themselves, and said, For what was this loss of the ointment? For this could have been sold for over three hundred denarii, and have been given to the poor; and they admonished her. (Mark 14:1-5)

“The oil of anointing”, by which is signified a representative of the Divine good of the Lord’s Divine Human, as being what is Divine in each and all things of His Human. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10264)

Reflection:

*Women in the Word represent an affection of truth (*Arcana Coelestia* 3030). So the fact that a woman anointed Jesus, symbolizes that the affection for truth is what recognizes that Jesus was the Lord, the Divine in Human form. Because she saw the Divinity in the Lord, She was inspired to give a most precious gift to the Lord. Are we able to recognize the Lord as worthy of our most precious devotion?*

Day 25: March 20

Readings:

But Jesus said, Let her be; why do you belabor her? She has worked a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you will, you may do them well; but Me you have not always. She has done what she could; she has come beforehand to put ointment on My body for the burying. Amen I say to you, Wherever this gospel shall be preached through the whole world, what she also has done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. (Mark 14:6-9)

“Burial” signifies resurrection, it also signifies regeneration, for regeneration is man’s first resurrection, as he then dies in respect to the former man, and rises again as to the new. By regeneration a man from being dead becomes alive; hence comes the signification of a “sepulcher” in the internal sense. (*Arcana Coelestia* 2916)

Reflection:

It was a custom in those times to anoint bodies with fragrant oils in preparation for burial, especially myrrh to represent resurrection (Arcana Coelestia 10252.7). In the case of the Lord that represented resurrection even with His body. Can we look at natural death in the same way, as merely a step on the path to heaven?

Day 26: March 21

Readings:

And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests, to betray Him to them. And when they heard, they rejoiced, and promised to give him silver; and he sought how he might opportunely betray Him. (Mark 14:10-11)

For the cupidity of gain and avarice has within it the desire not only to possess the whole world, but also to plunder and even to kill everyone for the sake of gain; indeed one impelled by such cupidity would commit murder for but little were not the laws a hindrance. Moreover, such a man in his possession of gold and silver regards himself as the greatest in power, however in external appearance he may seem otherwise, which shows that there is in avarice not only the love of the world, but also the love of self, and indeed the filthiest love of self. (*Arcana Coelestia* 4751)

Reflection:

The chief priests felt threatened by Jesus teaching about the genuine spiritual church, because their power was based on external rituals and offerings. Judas also was more motivated by the thought of gain than the eternal teachings of the Lord. Has following the Lord and spiritual life ever seemed like a threat to material gain or an easy comfortable life?.

Day 27: March 22

Readings:

And on the first day of unleavened bread, when they slaughtered the Passover, His disciples said to Him, Where will Thou that we go and prepare, that Thou may eat the Passover? And He sends out two of His disciples, and says to them, Go ye into the city, and there a man carrying a pitcher of water shall meet you; follow him. And wherever he shall enter, say ye to the householder, The Teacher says, Where is the inn, where I may eat the Passover with My disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared; there prepare for us. And His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found even as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover. And when it became evening, He comes with the twelve. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Amen I say to you, that one of you who eats with Me shall betray Me. (Mark 14:12-18)

By the “Passover” is signified the presence of the Lord, and the liberation of those who are of the spiritual church from spiritual captivity and from damnation. (*Arcana Coelestia* 8017)

Reflection:

The Passover was a celebration of liberation from Egypt, and the Holy Supper is also a celebration of the being liberated from spiritual bondage. The Lord came to earth to liberate us from the spiritual captivity of evil. We prepare for Holy Supper today by identifying our evils so we can be liberated from them. What is one evil you could start to be freed from today?

Day 28: March 23

Readings:

And they began to sorrow, and to say to Him one by one, Is it I? And another, Is it I? But He answering said to them, It is one of the twelve who dips with Me in the dish. The Son of Man goes indeed, even as it is written about Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It were good for that man if he had not been born. And as they ate, Jesus, taking bread, having blessed it, broke it and gave to them and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And taking the cup, when He had given thanks, He gave it to them; and they all drank out of it. And He said to them, This is My blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many. Amen I say to you, I will drink no more of the produce of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. (Mark 14:19-26)

That by “blood” is here meant the Divine truth, appears manifestly, because it is said that he who drinks has life, and abideth in the Lord, and the Lord in him. That the Divine truth and a life according to it effects this, and that the Holy Supper confirms it, can be known in the church. (*Apocalypse Revealed* 379.3)

Reflection:

When we take the Holy Supper we receive life from the Lord. A sign of having the Lord's life inside us is that we take joy in doing the right thing because it is good and true. Have you experienced delight in doing the right things even when there was no reward in it for you?

Day 29: March 24

Readings:

And Jesus says to them, All of you shall be caused to stumble in Me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter declared to Him, Even if all shall be caused to stumble, yet not I. And Jesus says to him, Amen I say to thee, that today in this night, before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny Me three times. But he said the more exceedingly, If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee! And also they all said likewise. (Mark 14:27-31)

Peter represented the Church's faith, or what amounts to the same thing, the Church as regards faith. The time when the cock crowed meant the final period of the Church, a time of day which was also called 'cock-crow'. The triple denial meant a complete denial of the Lord at the end of the Church. (*Arcana Coelestia* 10134)

Reflection:

No matter how strong we think we are, we will come into states of doubt. Trusting in ourselves or our own strength will not keep us from times of trial, not even Peter was strong enough. Spiritual struggles mean feeling torn between natural and spiritual loves and like Peter we will fail if we trust our own strength. How can failure help us grow?

Day 30: March 25

Readings:

And they came to a place whose name was Gethsemane; and He says to His disciples, Sit ye here while I pray. And He takes with Himself Peter and James and John, and began to be astounded and to be in agony. And He says to them, My soul is surrounded with sorrow unto death; remain ye here, and watch. And coming forward a little, He fell upon the earth, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee; make this cup to pass from Me; but not what I will, but what Thou will. And He comes and finds them sleeping, and says to Peter, Simon, sleep thou? Did thou not have strength to watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, unless you enter into temptation. The spirit is indeed eager, but the flesh is weak. (Mark 14:32-38)

The nature of the Lord's temptations-that they were the most terrible of all; and that He felt anguish from the very inmosts, even to the sweating of blood; and that He was then in a state of despair concerning the end and the event; and also that He had consolations. (*Arcana Coelestia* 1787.3)

Reflection:

The Lord was stronger than any other person, but still He experienced temptations as He glorified His Human. Obviously we can't defeat temptation on our own. Even learning to trust the Lord will not mean that we never experience struggle, but that we will come through temptation to greater faith and reliance on the Lord in the end.

Day 31: March 26

Readings:

And again going away, He prayed, saying the same word. And when He returned, He found them again sleeping, for their eyes were heavy, and they knew not what to answer Him. And He comes the third time, and says to them, Do you sleep still, and rest? It is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us go; behold, he who betrays Me is near. And straightaway, while He yet was speaking, comes Judas, being one of the twelve, and with him a crowd of many with swords and wooden rods, along with the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. (Mark 14:39-43)

The person who has not been regenerated is like a dreamer; one who has, is like someone wide awake. In the Word too natural life is likened to sleep, spiritual life to wakefulness. (*True Christian Religion* 606)

Reflection:

When spiritual life gets hard, it can be easy to try to escape into natural life and let our spiritual life fall asleep. We can be very successful in natural life while neglecting our spirit. We can distract ourselves with temporary happiness while neglecting the things that will bring us true and lasting joy. What does spiritual joy look like to you?

Day 32: March 27

Readings:

And he who betrayed Him had given them a signal, saying, Whomever I shall kiss is He; take hold of Him, and lead Him away securely. And coming, straightaway approaching Him, he says, Rabbi, Rabbi; and he kissed Him. And they put their hands on Him, and took hold of Him. And one of those who stood by, pulling a sword, smote a servant of the chief priest, and took off his ear. And Jesus answering said to them, Are you come out as against a robber with swords and wooden rods to take Me? I was with you daily in the temple teaching, and you took not hold of Me; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled. And leaving Him, they all fled. And there followed Him a certain young man, having a cloth cast around on his naked body; and the young men took hold of him; but he, leaving the cloth, fled from them naked. (Mark 14:44-52)

That the Lord Himself, as the Greatest Prophet, represented the state of the church in respect to the Word, is evident from all things of His passion; as that He was betrayed by Judas; that He was taken and condemned by the chief priests and elders. (*Doctrine of the Lord* 16.5)

Reflection:

Jesus allowed Himself to suffer and be mistreated because it was a fulfillment of scripture. It was a fulfillment of scripture because the nature of people to tend towards selfishness was prophesied even to the point of wanting to destroy the Lord. They rejected Jesus for standing up for the truth of charity and service to others. Have you ever had a negative reaction to fair and constructive criticism?

Day 33: March 28

Readings:

And they led Jesus away to the chief priest; and with him came together all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. And Peter followed Him from afar off, even into the courtyard of the chief priest; and he was sitting with the attendants, and warming himself at the fire. And the chief priests and the whole council sought a witness against Jesus to put Him to death, and found none. For many bore false witness against Him, and their testimonies were not alike. And certain ones standing up bore false witness against Him, saying, We heard Him say, I will undo this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. And neither so was their testimony alike. (Mark 14:53-59)

That “Jezebel slew the prophets of Jehovah” signifies the destruction of the church in respect to its truths; that “she wished to slay Elijah also” signifies a desire to annihilate the Word, for Elijah represented the Word. “The vineyard which by means of false witnesses she took away from Naboth” signifies the falsification of truth and the adulteration of good. (*Apocalypse Explained* 160.2)

Reflection:

One place this treatment of Jesus was foretold in scripture, was when false witnesses accuse Naboth in order to steal his vineyard. A vineyard is a symbol of the church (Day 12). It was necessary to have false witnesses accuse Jesus because He was the truth, and falsities can control the church only when the truth is destroyed. Don't let yourself fall on the side of dishonesty by misleading people or undermining their belief in the Lord's Truth.

Day 34: March 29

Readings:

And the chief priest standing up in the midst asked Jesus, saying, Answer Thou nothing? What do these witness against Thee? But He was silent, and answered nothing. Again the chief priest asked Him, and said to Him, Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am; and you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming with the clouds of heaven. And the chief priest, rending his tunics, says, What need have we still of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy; what appears to you? And they all condemned Him to be subject to death. And some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say to Him, Prophecy! And the attendants hit Him with a staff. (Mark 14:60-65)

“A man shall be forgiven every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven,” (Matt. 12:31, 32). Blasphemy against the Spirit means blasphemy against the divinity of the Lord’s Human, and the holiness of the Word. (*True Christian Religion* 299)

Reflection:

There are different types and levels of blasphemy. The only unforgivable sin is blasphemy against the holy spirit of the Lord. What does this mean? Blasphemy against the Lord’s Divine Human and the Word, in practical terms, means rejecting and making fun of the idea that we need to change and live as the Word teaches. It means rejecting the Lord’s help, or even that He has any authority in our lives. The only way to end up in hell is if we want to go there. Do you think there is anything appealing about hell?

Day 35: March 30

Readings:

And as Peter was beneath in the courtyard, there comes one of the maids of the chief priest; and seeing Peter warming himself, looking intently at him, she says, And thou also were with Jesus of Nazareth. And he denied, saying, I know not, neither do I comprehend what thou say. And he went outside to the porch; and the cock crowed. And the maid, seeing him again, began to say to those who stood by, This is one of them. And he again denied; and a little after, they who stood by said again to Peter, Truly thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech is similar. But he began to curse and to swear, I know not this Man of whom you speak. And the second time the cock crowed. And Peter remembered the saying which Jesus said to him, Before the cock crows twice, thou shall deny Me three times. And casting his thought on this, he wept. (Mark 14:66-72)

In order that He may make a man blessed and happy, the Lord wills a total submission, that is, that he be not partly his own and partly the Lord's, for then there are two lords, which no one can serve at the same time (Matt. 6:24). (*Arcana Coelestia* 6138.2)

Reflection:

Peter was afraid to admit to knowing Jesus, let alone being one of the disciples. It seems that despite his previous confidence Peter was afraid to die alongside the Lord. We ultimately will make a similar choice, to be willing to give up our lives for the Lord or to deny Him. The Lord does not expect us to give up our life because He needs the sacrifice, or wants to test us. We need to be willing to give up our old selfish life, before the Lord can give us the new life of heavenly joy. Does letting go of any thought about self, feel frightening or liberating?

Day 36: March 31

Readings:

And straightaway in the morning, the chief priests, having held a consultation with the elders and with the scribes and the whole council, bound Jesus, and led Him away, and delivered Him up to Pilate. And Pilate asked Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And He answering said to him, Thou sayest. And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. And Pilate asked Him again, saying, Answer Thou nothing? Behold how many things they witness against Thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marveled. (Mark 15:1-5)

If a man repels an insulting enemy, and in self-defense strikes him or delivers him to the judge in order to prevent injury to himself, and yet with a disposition to befriend the man, he acts from a charitable spirit. Wars that have as an end the defense of the country and the church, are not contrary to charity. The end in view declares whether it is charity or not. (*True Christian Religion* 407)

Reflection:

Some people have taken the command to turn the cheek as an endorsement of strict non-violence. Some have tried to re-interpret that command as a power move of some kind. What we see Jesus do in the situation is be silent in the face of lies and accusations. We know that the Lord is all loving and so He would not intentionally hurt or retaliate even when He was attacked. We are not supposed to allow evil people to hurt us or other good people, but we should not allow ourselves to be caught up in revenge. How easy is it to stand up to resist evil with a heart full of love and compassion?

Day 37: April 1

Readings:

And at the festival he would release to them one prisoner, whomever they asked for. And there was one called Barabbas, bound with fellow insurrectionists who had done murder in the insurrection. And the crowd, crying out, began to ask for him to do as he had always done for them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Do you will that I release to you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the chief priests had delivered Him up for envy. But the chief priests urged the crowd, that he should rather release Barabbas to them. And Pilate answering again said to them, What do you will then that I shall do to Him whom you call King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify Him! And Pilate said to them, Why? What evil has He done? And they cried out exceedingly, Crucify Him! And Pilate, intending to do something considerable for the crowd, released Barabbas to them, and delivered up Jesus, when he had whipped Him, to be crucified. (Mark 15:6-15)

The fact that evil is permitted, a state enjoyed by everyone's internal man, makes it obvious that man has free will in spiritual matters. (*True Christian Religion* 479)

Evils are permitted for the sake of the goal, which is salvation. (*Divine Providence* 249.3)

Reflection:

Even though it was a horrible crime, people were permitted to crucify the Lord. Freedom to love and do good is not possible without also allowing the freedom to hate and do evil. The people of the church were permitted to choose to rescue a criminal and condemn Jesus. The evil of crucifying our Lord let other people recognize that using the church for selfish goals is not just neutral, but actually diametrically opposed to heaven and the Lord. Are we guilty of having used the church for selfish gain? Do we attend only to feel good about ourselves, or have other people respect our piety?

Day 38: April 2 Palm Sunday

Readings:

And the soldiers led Him away into the courtyard, which is the Praetorium; and they call together the whole band. And they put crimson on Him, and put around His head a crown of thorns which they had braided. And they began to greet Him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they struck Him on the head with a reed, and spat on Him, and bowing the knees, worshiped Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took off the crimson from Him, and put on Him His own garments, and led Him out to crucify Him. And they compel one Simon, a Cyrenian, passing by, coming out of the field, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to take up His cross. (Mark 15:16-21)

And by the Lord, as King of the Jews, is meant the Lord as to Divine Truth, proceeding from the Divine Good of His Divine Love. Kings therefore in the Word signify truths. (*Apocalypse Explained* 433.24)

Jesus said to Pilate, “Thou sayest it, because I am King; for this have I come into the world, that I might give testimony to the truth” (John 18:37).

Reflection:

The soldiers mocked Jesus as “King of the Jews,” not knowing that He was truly the King. A king is supposed to lead his country to safety and success, the same way that the truth spiritually leads people to heaven. What do you think about the common idea of each person having their own truth and no one objective or ruling Truth?

Day 39: April 3

Readings:

And they bring Him to the place Golgotha, which is, being translated, Place of a Skull. And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh; but He received it not. And when they had crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots upon them, what every one should take. And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. And the inscription of His crime was inscribed, The King of the Jews. And with Him they crucify two robbers; one on His right hand, and one on His left. And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, And He was reckoned with the transgressors. (Mark 15:22-28)

Their giving to the Lord “vinegar mingled with gall,” which was also called “wine mingled with myrrh,” signified the quality of the Divine truth from the Word with the Jewish nation, namely, that it was mingled with the falsity of evil, and thus altogether falsified and adulterated, therefore He would not drink it. (*Apocalypse Explained* 519.2)

“Blessed are ye, when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and shall say every evil word against you falsely, for My sake; rejoice and exult, for great is your reward in the heavens; for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.” (Matthew. 5:10-12).

Reflection:

Jesus was condemned and crucified, because the church rejected what He stood for as evil and hellish. In reality the church had falsified the truth and was mixing evil with good. Jesus said being persecuted would lead to blessing. Good people will be spiritually persecuted by hell, but do you think that being rejected by the world is part bearing the cross?

Day 40: April 4

Readings:

And they who went by blasphemed Him, moving their heads and saying, Ah, Thou who undo the temple and build it in three days, save Thyself, and step down from the cross. And likewise also the chief priests, mocking, said to one another with the scribes, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel step down now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they who were crucified with Him reproached Him. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. (Mark 15:29-33)

All hellish spirits turn themselves backwards from the Lord towards the dense blackness and the darkness that are there in place of the sun and moon of this world, while all the angels of heaven turn themselves to the Lord as the Sun of heaven and as the Moon of heaven (*Heaven and Hell* 552)

Reflection:

Darkness, if we continually turn our back on the Lord's commandments, we will eventually become spiritually blind to His light and be left in the darkness. If we face the sun we see light, if we turn our backs to the sun we see our own shadow. All who turn their backs on the Lord during their life on earth, become evil spirits and live in perpetual spiritual darkness. Have you ever been wrapped up in a bad mood that made the whole world seem dark? What could help change that perspective?

Day 41: April 5

Readings:

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a great voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani? Which is, being translated, My God, My God, why have Thou forsaken Me? And some standing by, and hearing, said, Behold, He calls Elijah. And one running and filling a sponge with vinegar, and putting it around a reed, gave Him to drink, saying, Let be; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down. But Jesus, letting out a great voice, let forth the spirit. And the veil of the temple was ripped in two from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion, who stood by over against Him, saw that thus crying out He let out the spirit, he said, Truly this Man was the Son of God! (Mark 15:34-39)

In temptations apparently man is left to himself alone, although he is not; for God is then most nearly present in man's inmosts and sustains him; therefore when man conquers in temptation he is inmostly conjoined with God, as in temptation the Lord was inmostly united to God His Father. That in the passion of the cross the Lord was left to Himself is evident from His exclamation upon the cross: "O God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46) (*True Christian Religion* 126)

Reflection:

Jesus calling out in seeming despair shows us the nature of the trials we will face if we want to be united to Him. When we feel most alone the Lord is actually closely present with us, and we will experience that closeness after we pass through temptation. The veil that separated the people in the temple from the ark of the Lord, was ripped in two to show that now nothing separates us from directly reaching out to the Lord for help.

Day 42: April 6 Holy Thursday

Readings:

And there were also women beholding afar off, among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Little and of Joses, and Salome; who also, when He was in Galilee, followed Him and ministered to Him; and many other women who came up with Him unto Jerusalem. (Mark 15:40-41)

By men are signified those who are in truths, and by women those who are in good from the affection for truth. (*Apocalypse Explained* 555.11)

A woman arrayed with the sun, signifies the church with those who are in love to the Lord, and from that in love towards the neighbor. This is evident from the signification of “woman,” as being the spiritual affection of truth, from which the church is a church. (*Apocalypse Explained* 707)

Reflection:

Love and Faith are both important and yet love is what conjoins us to the Lord. Men generally symbolize faith while the Women represent love and affection. This is why Women are a key part of the resurrection story, and the women still followed the Lord even to the tomb, and they were first to learn of Jesus' resurrection.

Day 43: April 7 Good Friday

Readings:

And when evening was already come, since it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor who also himself waited for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. But Pilate marveled whether He were already dead; and calling for the centurion, he asked him whether He had been dead for long. And when he knew from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And having brought cloth, and taken Him down, he wrapped Him in the cloth, and laid Him in a sepulcher which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone onto the door of the sepulcher. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where He was put. (Mark 15:42-47)

When he takes the bread and wine, and hears the Lord's flesh and blood mentioned, to think to himself about the Holy Supper that it is the holiest act of worship, and to remember Christ's passion and His love for man's salvation. For He says: "Do this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19) (*True Christian Religion* 709.3)

The Lord Himself is present in the Holy Supper, and that flesh and bread are the Lord in respect of the Divine good of love, and blood and wine are the Lord in respect of the Divine truth of wisdom. There are therefore three items involved in the Holy Supper, the Lord, His Divine good and His Divine truth. (*True Christian Religion* 711)

Reflection:

We can respond to the Lords' great love for us, by receiving it and returning it. The only way to be able to receive the Lord's love and wisdom is to first remove evil. This is why the Holy supper which symbolized and corresponds to receiving those gifts from the Lord is a sacrament of repentance. Have you experienced a greater closeness to the Lord after examining your life to find an evil to repent from?

Day 44: April 8

Readings:

And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome had bought spices, that when they came they might anoint Him. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulcher as the sun was rising. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll away for us the stone from the door of the sepulcher? And when they looked, they beheld that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great. And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right, arrayed in a white robe; and they were astounded. But he says to them, Be not astounded. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; He is risen; He is not here; see, the place where they put Him. But go your way, tell His disciples and Peter that He goes before you into Galilee; there you shall see Him, as He said to you. And going out quickly, they fled from the sepulcher, with trembling and amazement; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. (Mark 16:1-8)

As the Lord's Human was glorified, that is, made Divine, He rose again after death on the third day with His whole body, which does not take place with any man; for a man rises again solely as to the spirit, and not as to the body. (*Doctrine of the Lord* 35.9)

Heaven does not consist of any angels created in the beginning, nor hell of any devil and his crew, but solely of those who have been born men. (*Last Judgment* 22)

Reflection:

As with many things He did, Jesus shows us the process we will all go through after a fashion. Eternal life begins immediately after death on the third day, not at some distant era in the future. In fact we could even say eternal life begins every day, since our choices are written on our spirits and continue with us after death in our spiritual bodies. What choices do you want your eternal character to be defined by?

Day 45: April 9 Easter Sunday

Readings:

And when He rose again in the morning on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. She having gone forth reported it to those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that He was alive and was observed by her, believed not. And after these things He was manifested in another form, to two of them as they were walking, as they were going into the country. And these, going away, reported it to the rest; neither did they believe them. (Mark 16:9-13)

As men rise again after death, therefore the Lord willed to undergo death and to rise again the third day, but to the end that He might put off everything human that He had from the mother and might put on the Divine Human; for everything human that the Lord took from the mother He rejected from Himself by temptations, and finally by death; and by putting on a Human from the Divine Itself that was in Him He glorified Himself, that is, made His Human Divine; therefore in heaven His death and burial do not mean death and burial, but the purification of His Human, and glorification. (*Apocalypse Explained* 899.14)

Reflection:

Mary was chosen to bring the Lord into the world, and another Mary was the first to see Jesus when He had been glorified and put off everything that was merely human. Both women represent an innocent willingness to follow and serve the Lord. Love leads us to the Lord and innocence enables us to follow Him.

Day 46: April 10 Easter Monday

Readings:

Afterwards He was manifested to the eleven as they sat, and reproached them for their unbelief and hard-heartedness, because they believed not those who had observed Him when He was risen. And He said to them, Going forth into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who believes not shall be condemned. And these signs shall follow along with those who believe: In My name they shall cast out demons; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; though they drink anything deadly, it shall not harm them; they shall lay hands on those who were ailing, and they shall become well. Then indeed the Lord, after speaking to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And going out, they preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the Word through signs following after. Amen. (Mark 16:14-20)

The Divine mercy is pure mercy towards the whole human race, to save it; and it is also unceasing towards every man, and is never withdrawn from anyone; so that everyone is saved who can be saved. And yet no one can be saved except by Divine means, which means have been revealed by the Lord, in the Word. The Divine means are what are called Divine truths, which teach how man must live in order to be saved. (*Heaven and Hell* 522).

The Lord cannot act contrary to His own Divine order, and His order is that man should examine himself, see his evils, resist them, and this as of himself, yet from the Lord. This does not indeed at

this day appear to be the Gospel, nevertheless it is the Gospel, for the Gospel is salvation by the Lord. (*Brief Exposition 52*)

Reflection:

Our mission going forward is to “preach the Gospel to every creature.” This especially means to have the Gospel fill every aspect of our lives. It may not be everyone’s job to be preachers or evangelists, but it is our job to make our life into an example and testament of the Lord’s salvation.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)