

# FIRST CHAPTER SAMPLE



# THE PASSION IN THE GREAT STORY OF JESUS

- |              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| 1. ARREST    | 4. CROSS  |
| 2. SANHEDRIN | 5. DEATH  |
| 3. PILATE    | 6. BURIAL |

Stephen Joseph Wolf



[idjc.org](http://idjc.org)

*The Passion in the Great Story of Jesus*

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Scripture in the Comparative Texts rendered as a study aid in the present tense and the cover art are by Stephen Joseph Wolf.

*The Word of God Proceeded Forth* and *Psalm 22 (O My God, My God, Why Have)* appeared previously in *Hinge Hour Singer* and may be treated as in the public domain.

Fragments of Psalms 31 and 69 appeared previously in *One Week in Ordinary Time*.

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For information on other faith-sharing titles  
see pages 101-103 or visit **idjc.org**.

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SOME OF THE VOCABULARY

GREEK	RENDERING	GREEK	RENDERING
<i>Sunedrion</i>	Sanhedrin	<i>doulos</i>	slave
<i>arxierea</i>	high priest	<i>paidiske</i>	servant girl
<i>arxiereis</i>	chief priests	<i>upereton</i>	attendants
<i>irammateis</i>	scribes	<i>Boule</i>	council
<i>presbyteroi</i>	presbyters,	<i>Ioudaion</i>	Judeans
<i>Pharisaioi</i>	Pharisees	<i>exousian</i>	authority
<i>arxontes</i>	rulers	<i>dynameos</i>	power

**THE PASSION IN THE  
GREAT STORY OF JESUS**

A Group Process		4
Possible Group Ground Rules		5
People of the Passion		6
<b>Week 1</b>	<b>ARREST</b>	7
	closing: Psalm 22	20
	Map of Jerusalem	22
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>SANHEDRIN</b>	23
	closing: Sorrowful Mysteries with the Jesus Prayer	36
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>PILATE</b>	39
	closing: Stations of the Cross	54
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>CROSS</b>	57
	closing: John Paul II's Stations	70
	North Jerusalem, Looking East	72
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>DEATH</b>	73
	closing: Good Friday Reproaches	84
	opening: Suffering Servant Song	86
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>BURIAL</b>	87
	closing: verses from the <i>Stabat Mater</i>	97
Sources and For More		98

## A GROUP PROCESS

This is the simple process I suggest for a 90 minute group meeting:

1. A song that most people know.
2. Some word of God from the Bible.
3. Some Narrative on the Scripture or the theme.
4. Some questions to prompt discussion.
5. A closing prayer to end on time.

For more guidance on leading a group, visit [www.idjc.org](http://www.idjc.org).

Faith sharing with *The Passion in the Great Story of Jesus* will be a bit different from other group processes. The focus is on the text. We make the assumption here that the editing done for each of the four gospels has been deliberate. Each gospel, written for a specific community, is God's inspired word for all peoples and decades. We engage these four accounts in the tradition of the Church, and listen for what grabs us and intersects the culture and our own life experience.

Some will want to read this book on their own, and that is normally fine. On this one, gather a handful of friends and read it together.

Blessings,

Rev. Steve Wolf

## POSSIBLE GROUP GROUND RULES

### Faith Sharing is:

**Regular:** I will do my best to make all sessions.

**Discerned:** There is no need to answer every question. Questions are offered to prompt sharing of stories; it is acceptable to simply offer an observation.

**Voluntary:** No one is required to share. The tone is invitational; verbal participation is encouraged but not demanded.

**Not Interrupted:** When someone is sharing, everyone listens before commenting or speaking. Side conversations are avoided, one person at a time.

**Not Contradicted:** The sharing is based on the person's own life story, so conclusions or critiques of what is shared are not appropriate. Avoid trying to take away feelings with comments like, *You shouldn't feel that way.*

**Done in "I" Language:** beginning with *I think* or *I feel* rather than *Mary said* or *Joe thinks*.

**Confidential:** What is said in the group stays in the group.

These ground rules are drawn from Joye Gros' *Theological Reflections*,  
Loyola Press, 2002, Groups are free to alter them as they wish.

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I agree with the group ground rules. (Signature and Date)

## PEOPLE of the PASSION

Annas, former high priest, father-in-law of Caiaphas  
 Attendants, guards in the temple or for Herod  
 Barabbas, robber/murderer, literally “son of Abba”  
 Beloved Disciple, John in the tradition, son of Zebedee  
 Bystanders, everyday crowd, a multitude  
 Caiaphas, high priest for 19 years, longest in the 1<sup>st</sup> century  
 Centurion, non-Jew giving witness to Jesus  
 Christ, in Greek: *Anointed One*; in Hebrew: Messiah  
 Robbers, criminals crucified with Jesus  
 James & John, sons of Zebedee, in Jesus’ inner circle  
 Jesus of Nazareth, Christ, Son of God and son of Mary  
 Joseph of Arimathea, member of the Sanhedrin  
 Judeans, people of Jewish descent and religious practice  
 Judas, one of the original Twelve Apostles, betrays Jesus  
 Malchus, high priest’s slave, his ear is cut off (by Peter?)  
 Mary, mother of Jesus, and her sister  
 Mary Magdalene, disciple of Jesus  
 Mary (mother of Joses) or another Mary  
 Nicodemus, member of the Sanhedrin  
 Peter, in Jesus’ inner circle, denies knowing Jesus  
 Pilate, Roman procurator/governor of Judea  
 Pilate’s Wife, loses sleep over a dream about Jesus  
 Presbyters, Elders, probably significant lay leaders  
 Priests, who serve in the Temple  
 Sanhedrin, the chief priests, scribes, and presbyters  
 Scribes, experts on the scriptures (Torah/Law)  
 Simon of Cyrene, forced to help Jesus carry his cross  
 Soldiers, Roman army or area mercenaries  
 Women, followers meeting Jesus’ needs from Galilee  
 Young Man, in Mark, runs away from the arrest naked

# Week 1

## arrest

Opening Prayer:      Keep a finger here and join in  
the song on the back cover.

← then, take turns reading the “People of the Passion.”

Decide together on Faith Sharing Ground Rules, page 5.

Members of the group read: **Mark 14:32-52**  
*from their personal bibles,*

one verse at a time, taking turns.

When it is your turn to read a verse,  
take a silent breath before reading it.

As each verse is being read aloud,  
other members read along silently . . .

Before going further, let each member of the group  
name *one* word, phrase, or image that caught his or her  
attention. Do this *without* any comment or explanation.  
There is time for that later . . .



Then, take five minutes to review the Passion Narrative  
Comparative Text on the next seven pages, in silence.

## GETHSEMANE (comparative text)

### Matthew 26:36-41

26:30 *And having sung a hymn, they go forth to the Mount of Olives.*

36 Then Jesus comes with them to a piece of land called Gethsemane,

and says to the disciples,  
“Sit here so going away there I may pray.”

37 And taking Peter and the two sons of Zebedee he begins to grieve and be distressed; then he says to them,  
“Deeply grieved is my soul, to death; remain here and watch with me.”

39 And going forward a little he falls on his face praying and saying,

“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will but as you.”

40 And he comes to the disciples and finds them sleeping, and says to Peter,  
“So were you not able to watch with me one hour?”

41 Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. Indeed the spirit is eager but the flesh weak.”

### Mark 14:32-38

14:26 *And having sung a hymn, they go forth to the Mount of Olives.*

32 And they come to a piece of land named Gethsemane,

and he says to his disciples,  
“Sit here while I pray.”

33 And he takes Peter and James and John with him, and begins to be greatly astonished and distressed,  
 34 and says to them,  
“Deeply grieved is my soul, to death; remain here and watch.”

35 And going forward a little he falls to the ground, and prays that if it is possible the hour might pass away from him, 36 and says,  
“Abba, Father, all things are possible to you; remove this cup from me; but not as I wish but as you.”

37 And he comes and finds them sleeping, and says to Peter,  
“Simon, you sleep? Could you not watch one hour?”

38 Watch and pray, Lest you come into temptation; indeed the spirit is eager, but the flesh is weak.”

## GETHSEMANI (comparative text)

### Luke 22:39-46

39 And going forth he goes as is his habit to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples follow him.

40 And coming upon the place he says to them, "Pray to not enter into temptation."

41 And he withdraws from them about a stone's throw

and kneeling he prays asking,

42 "Father, if you will, take this cup away from me; but not my will but yours let be."

43 And an angel from heaven appears to him and strengthens him.

44 And becoming in an agony he prays more earnestly and his sweat becomes as drops of blood falling down onto the earth.

45 And rising from prayer, coming to the disciples he finds them sleeping from the grief, 46 and says to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise up and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

### John 18:1

1 Having said these things, Jesus goes forth with his disciples across the Kedron Valley where there is a garden

which he and his disciples enter.

## BETRAYAL (comparative text)

### Matthew 26:42-49

42 Again the second time going away he prays, saying, “My Father, if this cannot pass away except I drink it, let your will be done.”

43 And coming again he finds them sleeping, for their eyes are heavy.

44 And leaving them again going away he prays a third time, saying again the same words.

45 Then he comes to the disciples and says to them, “Sleep now and rest; Behold: the hour has drawn near and the Son of humanity is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Rise; let us go. Behold: the one betraying me has drawn near.”

47 And while he is still speaking; Behold: Judas, one of the Twelve comes, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and presbyters of the people.

48 Now the one betraying him had given them a sign saying, “Whomever I may kiss, it is he. Seize him.”

49 And immediately approaching to Jesus, he says, “Greetings, Rabbi,” and affectionately kisses him.

### Mark 14:39-45

39 And going away again he prays, saying the same word,

40 And coming again he finds them sleeping, for their eyes are becoming heavy, and they do not know how they might answer him.

41 And he comes the third time and says to them, “Sleep now and rest; it is enough; the hour has come. Behold: the Son of humanity is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

42 Rise; let us go. Behold: the one betraying me has drawn near.”

43 And immediately while he is yet speaking, arrives Judas, one of the Twelve, and with him a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the scribes and the presbyters.

44 Now the one betraying him had given them a signal saying, “Whomever I may kiss is he. Seize and lead him securely away.”

45 And coming immediately approaching him he says, “Rabbi,” and affectionately kisses him.

**BETRAYAL (comparative text)****Luke 22:47-48****John 18:2-3**

47 While he is speaking,  
 behold: a crowd, and one of the  
 twelve, the one named Judas,  
 comes before them,

and draws near to Jesus  
 to kiss him.

48 But Jesus says to him,  
 “Judas, you betray the Son of  
 humanity with a kiss?”

2 Now Judas, the one betraying him,  
 also knows the place, because  
 Jesus has often assembled there  
 with his disciples.

3 And so Judas, taking the band of  
 attendants from the priests and from  
 the Pharisees, goes there with  
lanterns and torches and weapons.

## ARREST (comparative text)

### Matthew 26:50-56

50 But Jesus says to him,  
 “Friend, do what you are here to do.”

Then approaching they lay their hands on Jesus and seize him.

51 And behold: one of the ones with Jesus stretching out his hand draws his sword, and striking the slave of the high priest cuts off his ear.

52 Then Jesus says to him,  
 “Put back your sword into its place; for all the ones taking a sword will perish by a sword. Or do you think that I cannot ask my Father, and he will provide now for me more than twelve legions of angels? How then may be fulfilled the scriptures that it must be thus?”

55 In that hour

Jesus says to the crowds,  
 “As against a robber you come forth with swords and clubs to arrest me? Daily I sat teaching in the temple, and you did not seize me.

56 But all this has come to pass that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.”

All the disciples leaving him flee.

### Mark 14:46-52

46 And they lay their hands on him and seize him.

47 But a certain one of those standing drawing the sword strikes the slave of the high priest and cuts off his ear.

48 And answering Jesus says to them,  
 “As against a robber you come forth with swords and clubs to arrest me?

49 Daily was I with you teaching in the temple, and you did not seize me; but

that the scriptures may be fulfilled.”

50 And leaving them they all flee.

51 And a certain young man accompanying him is clothed in a linen cloth over his nakedness, and they seize him; 52 and leaving the linen cloth he flees naked.

## ARREST (comparative text)

### Luke 22:49-53

49 And those around him seeing the thing happening say, "Lord, shall we strike with a sword?"

50 And a certain one of them strikes the slave of the high priest and cuts off his right ear.

51 And answering Jesus says, "No more of this."

And touching the ear he cures him.

52 And Jesus says to the chief priests and temple guard officers and presbyters coming upon him, "As against a robber you come out with swords and clubs?

53 Daily while I was with you in the temple you did not lay your hands against me. But this is the hour of you and the authority of darkness."

### John 18:4-11

4 And so Jesus knowing all the things coming on him goes forth and says to them, "Whom do you seek?"

5 They answer him, "Jesus the Nazarene."

He tells them, "I am."

Now stands also with them

Judas the one betraying him.

6 And so when he tells them "I am," they step back and fall to the ground.

7 And so again he questions them, "Whom do you seek?"

And they say, "Jesus the Nazarene."

8 Jesus answers,

"I told you that I am;

so if you seek me, allow these to go,"

9 that might be fulfilled

the word he said,

"Those whom you have given me, I lost not one."

10 And so Simon Peter,

having a sword, draws it and strikes the slave of the high priest and cuts off his right ear.

The slave's name is Malchus.

11 And so Jesus says to Peter,

"Put the sword into the sheath. shall I not drink the cup which my Father has given to me?"

**MATTHEW 26:36-56**

J goes to Gethsemane  
 J takes Peter, James & John  
 & prays three times  
 Judas comes & kisses J  
 Slave's ear is cut off  
 J protests his arrest

**MARK 14:32-52**

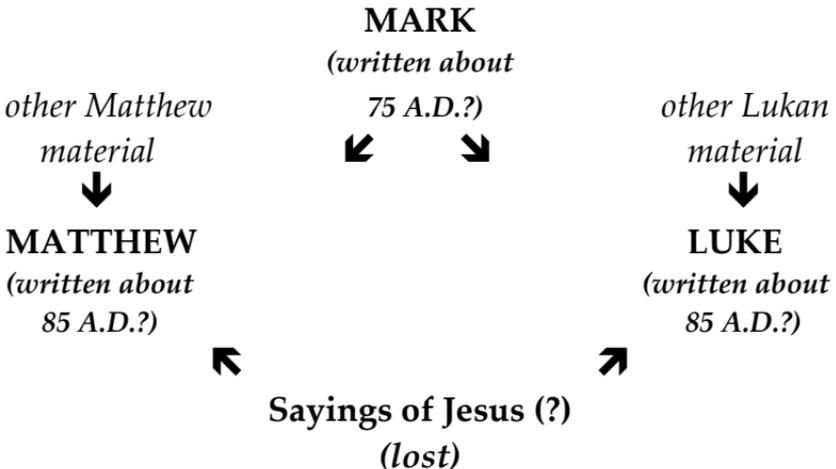
J goes to Gethsemane  
 J takes Peter, James & John;  
 & prays three times  
 Judas comes & kisses J  
 Slave's ear is cut off  
 J protests his arrest  
 Young man flees naked

**LUKE 22:39-53**

J comes to the place  
 J withdraws and prays  
  
 Judas comes & kisses J  
 Slave's ear is cut off,  
 then cured by J  
 J protests his arrest

**JOHN 18:1-11**

J crosses the Kedron  
 to a garden  
  
 Judas comes, no kiss  
 Attendants fall  
 Malchus' right ear is  
 cut off by Simon Peter



## SOME OBSERVATIONS

Most scholars (not all) hold that the Gospel of Mark was written before the others. If we date the passion and resurrection at about 33 A.D., and the editing of what we now call the gospel of Mark at about 75 A.D., there would have been about 40 years when these narratives were likely carried in oral traditions. An early collection of sayings of Jesus (long ago lost if it did exist), called “Q” after the German word for “source,” was likely used by the editors of Matthew and Luke. So, the best *theory* is that the editors of Matthew and Luke had in front of them the Gospel of Mark, the “Q” Sayings of Jesus, plus independent traditions and teachings about Jesus. The consensus of the scholars is that John developed from its own tradition, independently of the others, perhaps around 90 A.D.(?).

Jesus knew he was in trouble. His trouble took him to prayer, to the Father. He is also aware that his disciples are in danger. He refers to his suffering as a “cup” to drink. This hearkens to the question to James and John when their mother asked that they be allowed to sit on either side of him in his glory: *Can you drink the cup? You will drink the cup* (Mark 10:38...). All four gospels give us his very human prayer: *If there is another way...* But this prayer is integrated in deep trust: *Your will be done...*

Like Saint Paul’s famous *thorn in the flesh* (2 Cor 12:7), the nearest I have come (so far) to Jesus’ suffering in Gethsemane has been adult experiences with depression.

This is still the closest I have come in describing depression:

*Everything is heavy.  
It takes tremendous effort to get out of a chair.  
I eat quite a bit, even more than usual(!),  
but nothing tastes very good.  
I wake up in the middle of the night,  
after a hard time falling asleep.  
I do not want to see anyone or talk to friends.  
I do not want to exercise or pray.  
Movement brings on tears,  
so I try to stay very still.  
Everything is soggy and excruciatingly heavy.*

This is, best as I can tell, my primary cross. I do not like it; I would not wish it on anyone; nor do I want anyone else's cross. And here is the surprise: I am sometimes grateful for it. The grace of it has been a surprising closeness to God for the stubborn little man called me.

As an old friend likes to quote, comparisons are odious. Still, Gethsemane is a reminder that Jesus knows what it is to suffer, to be aware of it, and to know what it is like to anticipate suffering. Anticipation is sometimes the hardest part. Jesus teaches us to not worry, perhaps because he knows we will. To do so without losing hope, this is his path we follow.

Isn't it strange that when we seem to be at the height of our human powers, especially when we know power in comparison to other people, this is when we

grow the least in the spirit? Our suffering can take us to what one of my teachers calls *that deepest place where one is here and now being created by God*:

*To pray in the deepest and fullest sense  
is to live out of that place,  
to immerse oneself in it habitually,  
to become at home there.*

Robert Barron

Another great teacher, Fr. Gus Belauskas, celebrating 25 years as a priest, shared from philosopher Gabriel Marcel:

*You feel you are hedged in;  
you dream of escape; but beware of mirages.  
Do not run or fly away in order to get free: rather,  
dig in the narrow place which has been given you;  
you will find God there, and everything.  
God does not float on your horizon,  
he sleeps in your substance.  
Vanity runs, love digs.  
If you fly away from yourself,  
your prison will run with you  
and will close in because of the wind of your flight;  
If you go deep down into yourself  
it will disappear in paradise.*

Gabriel Marcel

This is anything but a peaceful night, but the tired disciples cannot keep their heavy eyes open. Prayer is not the place to go to find peace. In prayer, we may meet everything we fear. As I heard Geshe Sopa put it, *If you want peace, go to sleep. But if you want to be alive, go to prayer.* Is it the person about to die who is the most awake?

If they knew their eyes were heavy, it was from trying to *stay awake* and *watch*. Prayer is heavy like that sometimes. While wishing that we stay always awake and alert, still Jesus knows what Saint Paul would write, *the Spirit...comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings* (Romans 8:26).

In Mark and Matthew, Jesus says, ...*see, my betrayer is at hand* (or *drawn near*). There is a contrast here with the beginning of Jesus' ministry, where he proclaims, *The kingdom of God is at hand*, and then calls the first disciples (Mark 1:15-20). He is still speaking when the betrayer arrives to hand him over. The kiss, a sign of peaceful alliance and friendship, is the method of betrayal in this upside down story.

A Jewish man in a hospital bed once taught me something about the New Testament. He had been told by the Irish Catholic kids in his neighborhood that the death of Jesus was his fault. He always thought that the Christian New Testament used the name *Judas* for the betrayer of Jesus because it sounds similar to the word *Jews*. I shared with him what I had been taught by the Sisters of Mercy, that we ourselves are Judas when we sin. Friendly goodbyes did not quite bridge our worlds.

The use of a sword by Simon (or another) is a sign that disciples are not yet ready for Jesus' cup. Jesus as peacemaker in this situation highlights a saying from one of the Last Supper discourses: *I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now* (John 16:12). What has Jesus said that I might not yet be ready to hear?

The ear of the high priest's slave is cut off in all four gospels. In John Simon Peter is named as the cutter. What is the symbolism of the cut-off ear? Perhaps: *You're not gonna use it to listen, so you don't need it?* Anyway, Jesus the Healer in Luke restores the lost ear of the slave.

Jesus expresses surprise that he is being treated as an everyday criminal. Though they had to endure the rigamarole with Judas, those with swords and clubs and lanterns still want to pretend that everything is as it should be. What was *normal* was Jesus' *daily* preaching in the temple. They had to do this thing under cover of darkness because, at some honest level, they knew they were acting out of fear. It can be helpful to imagine ourselves in their shoes, as the people with power and responsibility. Then we should keep in mind that almost all of those who were first called by Jesus fled, almost all of them, out of fear. One young man ran away naked! What was that all about? And what about the linen cloth the young man was wearing? Is this baptismal imagery?

#### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. Did I notice anything else in the scripture text?
2. How have I acted in anticipation of trouble?
3. Have I had a time of trouble when I was close to God?
4. Our culture usually uses the death penalty right after midnight to not *upset* other prisoners. Why else?
5. Do I respond to violence or being disrespected any differently when I am spending lots of time with God?

## CLOSING PRAYER

Are there intercessions from the group?

## Psalm 22

**O my God, my God, why have** you a-ban-doned me?  
 Why so far from cries for help, rest-less an-guish call?  
 God, my God/, I call by day, no re-ply to hear.  
 God, my God, I call by night, no re-lief, I fear.

Yet en-throned, our Ho-ly One God of Is-ra-el,  
 Trust-ed by an-ces-tors you gave a place to dwell.  
 They cried out/ to you in need, beg-ging to be free,  
 Call-ing on their source of hope, free you let them be.

They say I am like a worm, hard-ly hu-man, scorned,  
 Mocked, de-spised by ev-'ry-one, tar-get of their fun.  
 All who see/ me mock and scorn, curl their lips and jeer:  
 "Let your Lord de-liv-er you, save you from your fear."

From the womb you drew me forth, safe-ty at the breast;  
 From the womb on you I fell, from my birth your guest.  
 Do not stay/ a-way from me, God, my God since birth;  
 Near are fear and trou-ble now, help-less I go forth.

**Wild/ bulls sur-round a-round, brag-ging on their horns.**  
 Li-ons fierce en-cir-cle me, rend a-bout and roar.  
 Drain-ing life/ like wa-ter soft, I can bare-ly speak.  
 Melt-ed is my heart, like wax, all my bones grow weak.

Dry as bro-ken bits of pots are my mouth and throat;  
 Dry tongue stuck in-side my mouth, ta-sting dust and dirt.  
 I can count/ each of my bones, wa-sted hands and feet;  
 Pack of dogs close in on me, dogs a-foot com-pete.

At my life they stare and gloat, at my life torn up,  
 For my clo-thing cast-ing lots, gar-ments rip-ping up.  
 Save me from/ the li-on mouth, dogs & bulls & sword.  
 Quick-ly, help, de-liv-er me from this gath-ered hoard.

Then will I pro-claim your name in com-mu-nit-y!  
 In a-ssem-bly, praise your name, this vow I will keep;  
 "Ja-cob now/ called Is-ra-el, all de-scen-dants call:  
 All who fear the Lord, give praise! Hal-le-lu-jah all!

"God did not spurn this one poor soul of mis-er-y,  
 Did not hide the face from mine, heard my cry in need.  
 All God's poor/ will eat their fill, all the an-a-wim,  
 Off-er praise and seek the Lord, hearts a-live in him."

From the edg-es of the earth all will wor-ship God,  
 Fam-il-ies and na-tions all turn-ing to the Lord.  
 All king-ship/ be-longs to God, ru-ler of us all.  
 All the liv-ing and the dead low in hom-age fall.

All who sleep in earth and dust bow in hom-age, kneel.  
 All de-scen-dants, serve the Lord, live for God, live well.  
 Tell each gen/-er-a-tion next of the Lord you've known,  
 Teach de-liv-er-ance to all peo-ple to be born.

## SOURCES and FOR MORE

Scripture in the Comparative Texts is rendered for reflection in the present tense by the editor.

**OPENING READINGS in group sessions should be done from group members' personal study bibles and not from the Comparative Texts.**

Kurt Aland, Editor, *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*

(English text Second Edition of the *Revised Standard Version*), United Bible Societies, 1985.

This classic work was most helpful in organizing the Comparative Texts.

*The NRSV-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and*

*English: With Interlinear Translation by Alfred Marshall*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1990

This used used heavily in rendering the Comparative Texts in the present tense.

Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J.,

Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm., Editors,

*The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, 1990, especially the articles by Harrington, Viviano, Karris and Perkins mentioned below.

Raymond E. Brown, S.S. *The Death of the Messiah*, 2 Volumes, Doubleday: Anchor Bible Reference Library, 1994.

- Brown, *The Passion Narratives of the Gospels*, a conference now available on CD from **welcome recordings.com**. The summaries on pages 14, 30-31, 48, 62, 78, and 90 And the drawing on page 72 are adapted from this. This is my favorite of this scholar's recordings.

Footnotes of the *New American Bible, Revised Edition*, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2010.

The NABRE footnotes are the best accessible concise scripture commentary available.

PHEME PERKINS, *Reading the New Testament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Paulist Press, 1988.

Page 17: *To pray in the deepest...*; Robert Barron, (I have lost track of where I read this quote, though every search for it has been a great joy; it may be from class notes. My favorite of the books by this great teacher is) *The Strangest Way: Walking the Christian Path*, Orbis Books, 2002.

Page 17: *You feel you are hedged in...*; Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*, translated by Emma Craufurd, Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1978.

Page 17: *If you want peace, go to sleep. But if you want to be alive, go to prayer.* Buddhist monk **Geshe Sopa** speaking at Mundelein Seminary. Somebody in the crowd asked if prayer was the way to find peace. This was his answer.

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*The Passion in the Great Story of Jesus*  
**is the 9<sup>th</sup> short faith-sharing book**  
(ninety minutes once a week over six weeks)  
**by parish priest Stephen Joseph Wolf**

**PONDERING Our FAITH:** revised with the new creed

1. The New Evangelization: revelation, faith, the trinity...
2. The Church: discipleship, community, family, prayer...
3. Sacraments: baptism, confirmation, eucharist, healing...
4. Vocation: holy orders, marriage, human dignity...
5. Moral Formation in Christ: grace, virtue, conscience...
6. The Sacred: liturgical year, art, music, devotions...

**TREE of LIFE:** Saint Bonaventure on the Christ Story  
Based on the Twelve Fruits of the *Tree of Life*.

**The Mystery of the Incarnation**

1. 1<sup>st</sup> His Distinguished Origin; 2<sup>nd</sup> His Humble Way of Life
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> The Loft of his Power; 4<sup>th</sup> The Plenitude of his Piety

**The Mystery of his Passion**

3. 5<sup>th</sup> Confidence in Trials; 6<sup>th</sup> Patience in Bad Treatment
4. 7<sup>th</sup> Constancy under Torture; 8<sup>th</sup> Victory in the Conflict

**The Mystery of his Glory**

5. 9<sup>th</sup> The Novelty of his Resurrection; 10<sup>th</sup> The Ascension
6. 11<sup>th</sup> The Equity of his Judgment; 12<sup>th</sup> Eternal Kingdom

**FORTY PENANCES for SPIRITUAL EXERCISE:**

living the great gift of mercy

*These “penances” are presented as spiritual exercises to continue the conversion experience that has already begun with the awareness that one has sinned, and are arranged following the Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola:*

- |                                      |                          |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Reality of God’s Complete Love    |                          |
| 2. Reality of Sin and Reconciliation |                          |
| 3. Universal Call to Holiness        | <i>seeds planted</i>     |
| 4. Vocation “Yes”                    | <i>memories provoked</i> |
| 5. Perfect Act of Love               | <i>questions raised</i>  |
| 6. Wholly New Way                    | <i>actions prompted</i>  |

**GOD’S MONEY:** where faith meets life in the world

*Through 14 tax seasons, Stephen Joseph Wolf became a certified public accountant and an accredited personal financial specialist before entering seminary. These six chapters draw heavily from the experience of those years.*

- |                            |                       |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Micah’s Vine & Fig Tree |                       |
| 2. Daily Bread This Day    |                       |
| 3. Building a Bigger Barn  |                       |
| 4. Parables of Stewards    | <i>Everything</i>     |
| 5. When Life is Changed    | <i>belongs to God</i> |
| 6. Community of Believers  | See Deut. 10:14       |

**BEING SPOUSES:** from celibate observation

*Unable to find a healthy parish resource about what marriage is, the author wrote this well-received work.*

- |                            |                        |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Marriage Sacramentality |                        |
| 2. The Domestic Church     |                        |
| 3. Permanence              |                        |
| 4. Fidelity                | from one of my         |
| 5. Children                | married brothers:      |
| 6. Intimacy                | <i>You can’t know.</i> |

**TWELVE-STEP SPIRITUALITY for CHRISTIANS**

following Vernon J. Bittner's *Twelve Steps for Christian Living*

*Here is a helpful introduction to this spirituality  
for those who may be unfamiliar with it.*

- 1. When I Am Weak
- 2. Let Go and Let God
- 3. Sick As Our Secrets
- 4. Progress, Not Perfection *because everyone*
- 5. Let It Begin With Me *is addicted*
- 6. One Day At A Time *to something*

**ANGER the JESUS WAY:** *reflections on*

*the only gospel story where the author said Jesus was angry,  
the healing of a man with a withered hand in Mark 3:1-6*

- 1. The Story
- 2. Watched in the Sabbath Assembly
- 3. Invited by Jesus
- 4. Riddle Silence *Looking around at them*
- 5. Anger-Grief *with anger and grieved...*
- 6. Turning to Freedom Mark 3:5

**PLANNING MY OWN FUNERAL?**

a four-week way to pray it

- 1. Vigil
- 2. Readings
- 3. Eucharist *surprised we laughed*
- 4. Left Behind *so much...*

**Some of the PRAYERBOOKS  
by STEPHEN JOSEPH WOLF**

*Two Weeks Ordinary*

*One Week in Ordinary Time*

*A Jesus Breviary*

*Gone Before Us: praying for the dead*

*In Health & In Healing*

*31 Days of God's Love-Call*

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