

## UNIT TWO: I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

### LESSON 5: The Passion of Christ: Our Redemption

#### CONTENTS OF LESSON:

1. With faith we examine the circumstances of Jesus' passion and death so as to understand better the meaning of Redemption. [CCC573]
2. Jesus was condemned by the Jewish authorities because he interpreted the Law and forgave sins with the authority of God. They would not accept him as God. [CCC581, 589-591]
3. However, we cannot blame the Jews for his death. All sinners are responsible. [CCC597-598]
4. It was God's plan that his Son should suffer and die for us. [CCC599] Jesus also freely accepted his passion (*Latin 'passio'=suffering*) though his human will had to struggle with the fear of suffering and death. [CCC612; YouCat100]
5. The cross was 'the most shameful and horrible method of execution'. Thus God shows his immense love for us. Every suffering person can receive consolation from Christ. [YouCat101]
6. All sources testify that Jesus really did die on the cross. [CCC627, Youcat103]
7. Jesus' death REDEEMS us (pays for our sin) and RESTORES our relationship with God. [CCC613]
8. *Jesus asks each of us to take up our cross and follow him. This means that we accept our own and others' suffering and unite it to Christ's suffering.* [YouCat102, CCC618]



REFERENCES: Isaiah 53:5, 11. Matt 20:28; 26:38-39; Mark 2:7; 8:34; 14:60-64; John 10:17-18, 19:33-35, 15:13; Acts 2:23; Eph 1:7. 'Rome Sweet Home' by Professor Scott Hahn.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts, Bibles, large crucifix, mat. [If prayer in a chapel is not possible]

#### I. STARTER:

*[Beforehand, a few students are asked to prepare to stage a 3-minute drama: A child is lured by a kidnapper. She believes him and follows him. He catches her and carries her away. The kidnapper calls the mother on the phone and demands a ransom. The father takes out all his savings from the bank and pays the ransom. The child is restored to her parents. All express joy.]*

- Why do you think we staged this drama? Does it connect up with Jesus in any way?  
*[Accept students ideas and bring out:]*
  - All of us, like the child, have listened to the voice of Satan and have sinned.
  - As a result we are prisoners, slaves to sin.
  - The only way we could be free is if a ransom was paid. But we cannot pay it ourselves.  
*[Write RANSOM on the blackboard]*
  - Jesus is the one (like the father in the skit) who paid the ransom. It was not as simple as taking money out of a bank. He paid it with his passion and death. The Latin 'passio' means suffering.  
*[Write PASSION= SUFFERING]*
  - Ransom is very close to the word 'redeem'. *[Write RANSOM=REDEEM]* In Jesus' time slavery was still common. If you wanted to set a slave free, you paid a sum of money to the owner. This is the meaning of the word REDEEM. The dictionary meaning is 'to regain possession of something in exchange for payment.'
  - As a result of our ransom being paid, we can be reunited to our Father and experience the joy of heaven.

#### II. DEVELOPMENT:

- Let us think about Jesus' Passion and Death. Along with the Resurrection it is the most important event in the entire history of the world.  
*[Give out the handout with the questions and ask the students to suggest answers. After this give out the handout with the quotes and answer the questions together using the quotes. Bring out:]*

1. Why was Jesus condemned by the Jewish leaders? [*Because the Jewish leaders would not accept him as God.*] He acted with the authority of God and claimed to be the Son of God. (See Mark2:7)
2. Who is guilty of Jesus' death? [*All who sin, that means EVERYONE!*] We cannot blame the Jews for this crime. And when Christians purposely turn their backs on God and get into sin in a serious way, it is even worse than when those who do not know Christ sin. (See CCC598& quote from St. Francis)
3. Did the Father purposely send his Son to die? [*Yes. The Father had already planned that his beloved Son should suffer and die for sinners.*] (See Acts 2:23)
4. Did Jesus accept the cross freely? [*Yes. He said this clearly.*] (See John10:17,18; 15:13)
5. Did Jesus fear death? [*Yes. Since he was a human being, he feared suffering and death just as we do.*] We see this at Gethsemane. (See Mt26:38, 39; Youcat 100)
6. Why the cross? Why not something less cruel? [*The cross shows us the great love of God. Jesus came to share the suffering of every human being, so that we can find strength in him.*] (See Youcat101, John15:13; quote from Mother Teresa.)
7. Did Jesus really die? [*Yes. The Bible clearly says so. Not only Christians, but historians through the ages have accepted the fact.*] When the soldiers pierced his side blood and water came out. This showed that he had died. (See Youcat163)
8. What is the use of Jesus' suffering and death? [*Jesus took our punishment, and redeemed us. He reunited us to God.*] No human being, even the most holy, could do this. (See CCC613, 616; Is:53:5; Eph1:7;Mt20:28)
9. What about us? What did Jesus mean by saying, "Take up your cross"? [*Jesus wants us to accept the suffering that comes to us and also share in the suffering of others. We think about him and offer it up to him.*] (See Mark8:34; Youcat102)

### III. INTERIORISATION/PRAYER:

[Take the students to a church or chapel and gather round a crucifix. If this is not possible, create a prayerful atmosphere by placing a crucifix in a specially prepared place. The students could sit close round it on a mat.]

- The message of the cross is a very powerful one if we really look at it as something real and personal. Scott Hahn, a very famous Catholic author, wrote about his conversion experience. As a young man Scott had gone for a retreat just because the girl he liked was going. Then God took over. He wrote:

*'On the first night the retreat speaker said, "Take a look at the Cross. And if you are tempted to treat your sins lightly, I want you to take a hard, long look." He made me realize for the first time that, yes, my sins were what put Jesus on the Cross.*

*The next night he challenged us in another way. He said, "If you are tempted to treat the love of God lightly, look again at the Cross, because it's God's love that sent Christ there for you." Up to that point I had thought of God's love as sentimental. But the Cross is anything but sentimental.'*

A few days later in the middle of the night, Scott said a simple prayer giving his life to God. From that time on something changed. As he began to act differently, his friends, who were into drugs and other harmful things, asked him to leave their group. It was painful, but slowly God gave Scott true friends and then a powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Scott is now a well-loved professor in a Catholic college in the US.

- Let us spend some time in silence just looking at the cross. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you realize how terrible sin is, and how much Jesus loves YOU. Let his love enter your heart and mind. [Students pray in silence for 5 to 10 minutes.]

**HOME ASSIGNMENT:** ⇨ Pray the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary with your family in front of a crucifix. Say a few words before each decade.