



**Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network**  
UNITED STATES | CANADA      APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER

## Talk 3. 'The Cross: Small Group Reflection'

*-outline for reflection; for personal prayer, in-person meeting or via zoom—*

**[Leader] Daily offering prayer:** O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys, and sufferings of this day in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world.

I offer them for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart:

the salvation of souls, reparation for sin, and the reunion of all Christians.

I offer them for the intentions of our bishops and of all Apostles of Prayer, and in particular for those recommended by our Holy Father this month.

**Grace:** We ask for the grace to believe more fully in the infinite love God has for us, for Christ offers Himself on the cross to free us from sin and death. He offers His very Heart for us.

**[Reader 1] Scripture:** John 19:31-34: Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out.

**[Reader 2] Quote:** "Jesus wanted to show us his heart as the heart that loved so deeply... God loved us, he loved us with such great love. I am thinking of what St. Ignatius told us.... He pointed out two criteria on love. The first: love is expressed more clearly in actions than in words. The second: there is greater love in giving than in receiving. These two criteria are like the pillars of true love: deeds, and the gift of self. The shepherd close to his flock, to his sheep that he knows one by one. The Lord loves us tenderly. The Lord knows the beautiful science of caresses — God's tenderness. He does not love us with words. He approaches us, and in being close to us gives us his love with the deepest possible tenderness. More difficult than loving God is letting ourselves be loved by him. Lord, I want to love you but teach me the difficult science, the difficult habit of letting myself be loved by you.... Perhaps this is what we should pray for at Mass." Pope Francis [*Homily, Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus 07.06.13*]

**[Leader] Reflection questions:**

What is the call to action of Pope Francis' homily? What emotions do I feel in connection with the Scripture passage above? Where in my daily life or prayer do I most realize God's love for me? [*All: take 1 min in quiet reflection; 2 min to journal; and then share with the group*]

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