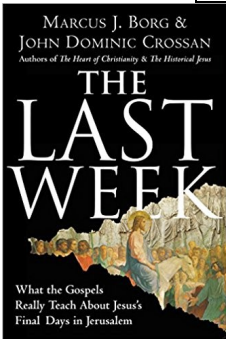


Sunday February 18, 2018



**St. Mary's Church**  
**Stone Harbor, New Jersey**

We Welcome You to Join Us  
For the Adult Forum and  
Worship  
All Year Long (well, almost)!



	Date	Lent	Chapter	Last Week
	February 18	1	1 & 2	Palm Sunday Monday
	February 25	2	3 & 4	Tuesday Wednesday
	March 4	3	5	Thursday (Maundy)
	March 11	4	6	Friday (Good)
	March 18	5	7	Saturday (Holy)
	March 25	6 (Palm Sunday)	8	Easter Day

Very brief summary and some focusing questions.

Mark 11.1-11 Two processions enter Jerusalem on this day. The first contains Jesus, seated on an ass, welcomed by his supporters. The second contains Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, coming in to ensure no trouble during Passover celebrations. Jerusalem is central to the history of the Jews (Hebrews) and central for Mark. He wrote close to its destruction by Rome in the rebellion of 66-70AD, and his story is influenced by that later event.

For Mark, Jesus' message is about the Kingdom of God, and the Way to reach it.

- What is God's sort of Kingdom?
- To whom did Jesus talk?
- What does "fellowship" with Jesus mean?
- What was the confrontation *not* about?

On the following day, Monday..." The New Testament is full of symbolic stories, just as in the Old Testament. The stories are not necessarily history, but they are parables, stories which are always true and significant, and not limited to descriptions of particular historical events.

- The Fig Tree
- A note on Mark's method. Only the first half of the Fig story is given here, the second half not until Tuesday. Why? Because Mark uses frames.
- The incident in the temple. Really a "Den of Robbers" ?
- Were "The Jews" to blame for Jesus' death?
- Weren't the money-changers crooks?

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

At the end of the book the authors pose questions for discussion. Below are the discussion questions for the first two chapters.

### Chapter 1 Palm Sunday

1. What are the two processions, and what do they signify?
2. An important theme of the chapter is Jerusalem's role and ambiguity.
  - What is significant about this theme in the Jewish Bible and Jewish practice?
  - What had its role and significance become in the time of Jesus?
  - What was Pilate's role in the governance of Jerusalem and Judea?
  - What was the economic situation in the Jewish homeland in the time of Jesus?
3. What role does Jerusalem play in the Gospel of Mark?
4. What impression do you get of Jesus from this chapter?



### Chapter 2 Monday in Holy Week

1. How do you understand the method and meaning of the Markan frames?
2. Explain how those frames work in Mark 3:20–35.
3. Interpret what is at stake for Mark in the frames of 5:21–43 and 6:7–30.
4. Use your understanding of Mark's frames to explain why he wrote that Jesus cursed a fruitless fig tree out of season.
5. How does the derivation of the word sacrifice from the Latin *sacrum facere* ("to make sacred") explain the theory and practice of blood/animal sacrifice?
6. Why had the temple and high-priesthood become deeply ambiguous—both good and bad—for many first-century Jews?
7. Explain how both word and deed concerning the temple in Jeremiah 7 and 26 should interpret Jesus's words and deeds in Mark 11:15–18.
8. How do the Entrance incident and Temple incident create twin symbolic actions for Mark?
  - Were they both acts of nonviolent resistance?
  - If so, against what?
  - If so, were they intentional as a set?
  - Was Jesus deliberately seeking martyrdom?



Before leaving this morning's discussion, I would like to offer a caveat, perhaps that is too harsh, maybe an alert. While Borg and Crossan are widely respected Biblical academics, there are some commentators who feel somewhat differently about their approach. One commentator said that their "alternative passion of Christ" is "scholarly" and this book represents "politically concerned analysis of Christianity at its best." A more conservative observer wrote that their (Borg/Crossan) perspectives "...are consistently given a progressivist political spin (e.g., the "cleansing of the Temple" is a protest against Jewish-Roman collaboration, not against money-changing in the Temple per se) and that traditional theological concepts like the Resurrection and the Atonement are rejected or reinterpreted." I offer this, not to imply any judgment upon their (Borg/Crossan) analysis, but as a way of soliciting your views.