

Condemned by Religious Leaders, Jesus is Nondefensive (Mark 14:53-65)

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Guidelines: Protect confidentiality and follow the leader's prompts.

Ignatian Meditation Process: Ignatius focuses on the Passion of Christ in Week 3 of *The Spiritual Exercises*. Read the introduction and then "ask for the grace." Then quietly read the passage by using your imagination to enter into the story, sensing and feeling what's going on. Don't analyze the passage or seek insights — *experience yourself as a character in the story*. After the second reading have a "colloquy" (short, personal conversation) with the Lord. You can use the prompts and questions at the bottom to guide your prayer time and journaling (and sharing with others).

Introduction: A diverse group of Jewish religious leaders band against Jesus, their common enemy. They don't give him a fair trial and they slander and abuse him. They break their own rules and God's laws, showing their hypocrisy and evil hearts. But Jesus is quiet and doesn't defend himself. He only speaks to acknowledge that indeed he is indeed the Messiah and Son of God. Jesus shows us that the way to endure judgement and mistreatment with patience and kindness is by trusting in the love, affirmation, and power of our unseen Father who is with us.

Ask For the Grace: Father God, I ask for the grace I desire: for sorrow, regret, and confusion because the Lord is going to his Passion for my sins.

Imagine Yourself in the Gospel: Mark 14 (MSG)

53-54 They led Jesus to the Chief Priest, where the high priests, religious leaders, and scholars had gathered together. Peter followed at a safe distance until they got to the Chief Priest's courtyard, where he mingled with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.

55-59 The high priests conspiring with the Jewish Council looked high and low for evidence against Jesus by which they could sentence him to death. They found nothing. Plenty of people were willing to bring in false charges, but nothing added up, and they ended up canceling each other out. Then a few of them stood up and lied: "We heard him say, 'I am going to tear down this Temple, built by hard labor, and in three days build another without lifting a hand.'" But even they couldn't agree exactly.

60-61 In the middle of this, the Chief Priest stood up and asked Jesus, "What do you have to say to the accusation?" Jesus was silent. He said nothing.

The Chief Priest tried again, this time asking, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?"

62 Jesus said, "Yes, I am, and you'll see it yourself: The Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Mighty One, Arriving on the clouds of heaven."

63-64 The Chief Priest lost his temper. Ripping his clothes, he yelled, "Did you hear that? After that do we need witnesses? You heard the blasphemy. Are you going to stand for it?"

They condemned him, one and all. The sentence: death.

65 Some of them started spitting at him. They blindfolded his eyes, then hit him, saying, "Who hit you? Prophecy!" The guards, punching and slapping, took him away.

1st Reading: Visualize yourself in the Gospel story. Don't seek intellectual insights — stay with the imagery. Use your senses to see, touch, feel, and hear. What part of the story are you drawn to? Which character do you identify with? Or are you a bystander?

2nd Reading: Experience the story in the role of the character God led you to. Then talk with the Lord. What do you feel? How does this relate to something in your life today? What is God saying to you?