

Catholic Digital Resources Presents

**FORGIVEN:  
A Passion Play of Peter and Judas**

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**CAST:**

Jesus Christ  
Simon Peter  
Judas Iscariot  
James  
John  
Andrew  
other disciples  
Jewish townspeople  
blind person or people  
lame people  
Man #1, #2  
Woman #1, #2  
Pharisees #1, #2  
other Pharisees (optional)  
Roman soldiers

**PROPS:**

Costumes  
Crutches, walking sticks  
Palm leaves  
Table or altar  
Uncut loaf of bread  
Ceramic chalice  
Other props for Last Supper  
Sets are optional (use a lightly staged sanctuary  
or build set pieces according to local skills)

**MUSIC:**

Selections are chosen by the Music Director,  
according to its familiarity with the local  
audience or to best utilize the choir and/or  
musical talent that is locally available in the parish.

PREVIEW  
PERUSAL COPY

## SCENE 1

*Instrumental music of the Director's choosing begins five minutes before the play starts, and ends when Jesus, Peter, and the other disciples walk onto the stage. The disciples are talking quietly amongst themselves. Jesus is in the lead, looking pensive.*

*From seats in the audience, the townspeople stand up, recognize Jesus, and exclaim things such as: "Look! It's him! The healer! I heard he's a prophet! He's a miracle worker! He's a great prophet! Jesus heal me!" They hurry to him, some limping, some using crutches or walking sticks, some blind and being led by friends. They surround Jesus, causing Jesus and the disciples to stop.*

*Jesus smiles warmly and lovingly reaches out to touch each person. The disciples watch in awe from the background, occasionally pointing at people who are healed, whispering joyfully to each other. The townspeople react to his healing touch in various ways: some kneel in awe, those who were limping jump freely, others throw down crutches and run, the blind discover they can see, etc. The people wander off as they're healed, leaving through the various aisles of the church.*

*Jesus is left alone with his disciples, who gather around him, congratulating him with pats on the back, etc. They are excited. Jesus quiets them.*

**Jesus:** Why are you still amazed? You've been with me for three years, now.

**Peter** (*enthusiastically*): Master, for all of my life I've heard the prophets in the scriptures promise that the kingdom of God would one day come to Israel in power, but I never believed I would see it happen with my own eyes. I used to think that miracles belonged to the times of Moses and Elijah. But you've changed my faith. My faith grows every time I watch you perform a miracle. When you heal people, when you cast out demons, when you multiply the loaves of bread and the fish, my faith grows again! I need to keep seeing these things.

**Jesus** (*looking at all the disciples*): Who do the people say that I am?

**Andrew:** Some say you're John the Baptist.

**Judas:** Others say you're Elijah.

**James:** Jeremiah.

**John:** A prophet!

**Jesus:** And who do *you* say that I am?

*All pause to think.*

**Peter** (*with certainty and reverence*): You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

**Jesus** (*putting a hand on Peter's shoulder and smiling*): Blessed are you, Simon. Your human reasoning could not have revealed this to you. It was my Father in heaven who told you this. And so I say to you, you are Peter. The name indicates that you are a rock of faith. Upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Peter, I give to you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

*Jesus takes his hand off of Peter and speaks to the whole group.*

**Jesus**: Do not -- do not! -- tell anyone that I am the Messiah. The time will come later for the world to find out. First, I must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly.

*The disciples look surprised and unhappy. A few mumble briefly to each other. At the same time:*

**Peter**: No!

**Jesus**: I must suffer at the hands of the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes.

**Peter**: Don't let that happen, Master. Everything's been going great so far. Don't let anything change that! As the Son of God, you have the power to protect yourself and your ministry.

**Jesus**: Hear me and remember what I tell you. If you understand my words, you will avoid needless anguish. I *will* suffer, and I will even be killed (*the disciples all gasp and their mumbling gets louder*), but on the third day I will be raised.

**Peter** (*taking Jesus by the elbow to pull him away from the noisy group*): Suffer and be killed?! Jesus, listen to me. God forbid such evil should happen to you! That cannot possibly be God's plan. What would we do without you? What about all the good you've been accomplishing? You must not let anything stop your ministry. Suffering and death? No way!

**Jesus** (*yanking free from Peter's hold*): Get behind me, Satan! You're an obstacle to me. Simon, beware: you're thinking not as God does, but as human beings do. You've become a tool of the devil.

*Peter stares back at Jesus in shock and disbelief. The other disciples continue discussing the matter amongst themselves, looking shocked and confused. Jesus softens his expression and waits for Peter to understand. Peter, however, looks away, unable to bear the loving gaze of Jesus. He quickly turns and walks offstage. Jesus follows him more slowly. The others follow behind Jesus, except Judas.*

**Judas**: What's the matter with Jesus? I thought he was going to save Israel from Roman tyranny! I think he's lost sight of God's priorities. (*After a pause, he follows the others.*)

## SCENE 2

**Music:** Choose a “Hosanna!” type of song that the audience knows and sings along with.

*For the duration of the song, all the townspeople come down the main aisle from the back of church, processing around the church using all the aisles, waving palm leaves and singing. When the song ends, Man #1 jumps up onto the stage and calls out a question to the townspeople and the audience.*

**Man #1:** What are you doing? Who are you honoring?

**Man #2** (located somewhere in an aisle): It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee! He has come to our holy city Jerusalem!

*All the townspeople make their way to the stage, shouting "Hosanna!" As they do, Jesus enters the stage from the right, followed by his disciples. Pharisees enter from the left. Jesus mingles with the people, welcoming them individually and warmly, inviting them to sit. Gradually, everyone sits on the floor, except the Pharisees, who stand off to the side. All look expectantly at Jesus.*

**Jesus** (standing near the back wall, facing the townspeople and audience, speaking to both): Listen to me, my people. Let your lives reveal the love of God! Share His love with one another. Humble yourselves and serve each other, for this is how God's love is communicated.

*(One of the Pharisees causes a commotion by pushing a townspeople who's in his way.)*

**Pharisee #1:** Move! Out of my way!

**Jesus:** Do everything the scribes and the Pharisees tell you to do, because they've taken their seat on the chair of Moses. BUT! Do not follow their example, because they do not practice what they preach. *(The Pharisees look angry and uncomfortable.)* All their works are performed to be seen so that they can be admired. They love places of honor in synagogues, and they love being called rabbi, teacher, master. Don't be like them! Don't desire to be anyone's master. You have but one master, and he is the Lord your God. Follow the example of the Messiah, who does not come to be served but to serve. The greatest among you must be the servant of all. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted. *(He turns toward the Pharisees and points at them, then shouts:)* Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees!

*The Pharisees get indignant and march off-stage angrily. The last one who leaves shouts at the crowd just before exiting.*

**Pharisee #1:** Don't stay here listening to this false prophet! You are idiots if you believe what he says! *(He exits.)*

**Music:** "Whatsoever You Do To The Least Of My Brothers, This You Do Unto Me."

*During the song, Jesus smiles and looks lovingly at the people, and the townspeople watch him. When the song ends, the townspeople leave using all the church aisles. The disciples rise last and gather around Jesus.*

**Jesus:** You know that in two days' time it will be Passover. It is then that the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.

**James** *(to a disciple next to him):* Crucified?! He can't be serious!

*The disciples remain silent and uneasy. Jesus slowly turns away from them, looks up to heaven, sighs heavily, then exits by stage-right. All the disciples follow him, heads drooping, except for Peter and Judas, who remain on stage.*

**Peter** *(to Judas):* He must protect himself. Israel needs him. I need him. Judas, if he won't protect himself from his enemies, then it's up to us to protect him. We can't let anyone stop him from doing what he's been doing.

**Judas:** Do you still believe he's the Messiah, Simon?

**Peter** *(firmly):* Yes, I do. That's why it's so important that we keep him alive.

**Judas:** For a long time I was sure he was the Messiah we've all been waiting for. But what has he done to free us from the cruelty of Roman tyranny? He knows we need a deliverer. He's seen the widows cry because their husbands have been tortured to death by the evil Romans. He's talked to the girls who've been raped by the soldiers. He says he understands their pain. But has he spoken out against the sins of our enemies? No! Instead, the target of his criticism is our own people, the scribes and Pharisees of our own nation.

**Peter:** He teaches us that we should love our enemies.

**Judas:** Scripture says that the true Messiah will *deliver* us from our enemies. It's been three years since Jesus got started, and he's done nothing to free us from the strangling grip of Rome. Now he's talking about his time coming to an end. Don't you see what he's doing? He's expecting defeat. He's willing to let his enemies kill him. Why isn't he doing more to help his own people? Look at how many followers he's got! He can lead them to victory against Rome. But if he's killed, everyone will lose hope. Jesus is hurting the cause. We've got to stop him!

**Peter** *(shaking his head sadly):* I don't understand him anymore.

*Peter walks off-stage, going the way of the other disciples.*

**Judas** *(looking up toward heaven):* O God, free us from Rome! What can I do to prevent the death of Israel's renewed dream of deliverance? The people's hope for freedom must not be crushed! My hope must not be crushed! If Jesus wants to plan for failure, he must be stopped.

*The Pharisees return to the stage and walk across the front of it. Judas watches them from a distance.*

**Pharisee #1** (*while walking*): We've got to find a way to stop the Nazorean before he does any more damage.

**Pharisee #2**: But how? We can't arrest him in front of the people. It would start a riot. We need to find out where he goes when he's not out in public. If only we could get inside help from one of his disciples.

**Judas** (*calling out to the Pharisees*): Why do you want to arrest Jesus?

**Pharisee #1** (*stopping*): Who are you?

**Pharisee #2** (*to #1*): I've seen him before. He's one of the close followers of Jesus.

**Judas**: I *am* one of his followers, yes, but only because I want to help deliver Israel from Roman oppression. I used to think that Jesus wanted the same thing.

**Pharisee #1**: So now you realize he's a false messiah?

**Judas**: Or badly misguided. I still think he has the power to free us from Rome.

**Pharisee #2**: Perhaps the high priest Caiaphas and the rest of the Sanhedrin could teach him what a real messiah should do. If we could only get a hold of him for a while.

*Judas hesitates, thinking. The Pharisees glance at each other.*

**Pharisee #1**: If you hand him over to us, we'll give you thirty pieces of silver.

**Pharisee #2**: We want to arrest him quietly, with few people around.

**Pharisee #1**: I'm sure you can put the thirty pieces of silver to good use. Help the needy and the oppressed with it, if you want!

**Judas**: I'll let you know when I see an opportunity.

*The Pharisees exit by the left side of the stage, and Judas by the right.*

## SCENE 5

*The stage remains empty for a minute, then six townspeople enter and gather near a "doorway," stretching to get a "peek" through it. They're looking into the assembly of the Sanhedrin where Jesus is being questioned. Peter walks on-stage, appearing nervous and frightened. He tries peering through the same door, but nervously backs away, for fear that someone will notice him.*

**Woman #1:** That man that the high priest is questioning in there -- it's Jesus the Galilean. I saw him preach near the temple. *(She notices Peter and points at him.)* You were with him. Can you tell me what's going on?

**Peter (loudly):** No! I don't know what you're talking about. *(He starts to leave, but another woman stops him.)*

**Woman #2:** Sure you do. *(To the others:)* This man was with Jesus. I saw him!

**Peter:** I swear it, I do not know the man! *(He tries to get away from her, but the rest of the people block his path.)*

**Man #1:** You're lying. You're one of that man's disciples. I'll bet you're one of his closest friends.

**Peter:** No I'm not! I don't know him, I tell you. I don't know him!

*Just then, two Roman soldiers lead Jesus out through the Sanhedrin door, followed by the Pharisees. His hands are bound. He is marched past Peter and the others. Jesus pauses and looks Peter in the eye. For a moment, the two gaze at each other. Jesus looks like he longs for Peter's love, then he is pushed forward and off-stage. Peter covers his face with his hands and weeps. He then runs off-stage on the other side. Everyone else exits where Jesus did.*

## SCENE 6

**Music:** "Via Dolorosa"

*During the song, Jesus comes out carrying the cross, led and followed by Roman soldiers. They go up and down the church aisles. By the end of the song, they arrive on stage, the cross is laid down and Jesus is "nailed" to it. The cross is then raised. It's position is in the very back center of the stage.*

**Music:** "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" (one verse)

*During this song, Judas enters the stage from one side and Peter enters from another. They cannot see or hear each other. They stand on opposite sides, turned away from each other and away from Jesus.*

**Judas:** What have I done?

**Peter:** What have I done?

**Judas:** I can't get it out of my mind -- that look in his eyes when I betrayed him.

**Peter:** I can't get it out of my mind -- that look in his eyes when I betrayed him.

**Judas:** He called me "friend."

**Peter:** I was his friend.

**Judas:** I never intended to hurt him.

**Peter:** I told him, I *promised* him -- that I'd never do anything to hurt him. But I did hurt him!

**Judas:** He brought it on himself. It's his own fault.

**Peter:** I told him that even if the faith of everyone else was shaken, mine would never be. But my faith *was* shaken. When he got arrested, I began to doubt that he really is the Messiah. I was sure that the true Messiah would never allow anyone to stop his ministry.

**Judas:** I thought they were just going to talk to him. I thought they wanted to help Jesus understand that he's not the true Messiah if he doesn't save our people from Roman tyranny. But they're crucifying him!

**Peter:** They're crucifying him! Why? Why? I don't understand! Why does this have to happen? He's my closest friend. He means so much to me. I love him. But when he needed me most, what did I do? I betrayed him. His last memory of me is going to be that I betrayed him. I denied that he was my friend!

**Judas:** He's not really the Messiah. A great prophet, yes. Perhaps the greatest we've ever had. Greater than Moses. Greater than Elijah. But not the Deliverer that we need.

**Peter:** How could his enemies capture him and kill him if he is truly the Messiah? I don't understand. God! I don't understand! (*pause*) Help me, God, to understand. Help me!

**Judas:** I don't understand how he could be the Messiah.

**Peter:** I remember all the good he has done, all the love he gave, all the miracles he did to help people. Of course Jesus is the Messiah. I don't know why he has to suffer and die, but I do believe he is our Messiah. Oh, no -- help me, God! I betrayed not only a friend -- I betrayed the Messiah!

**Judas:** But he was a friend. He cared about me more than anybody I ever knew. He loved me. And I loved him. I betrayed a friend! Oh, God, I've killed the friend who loved me most! What will my life be like without him? I need him. He's gone.

**Peter:** Help me, God! I want Jesus to know that I really do love him. I want him to know that I'm sorry. I'm so, so sorry.

**Judas:** What have I done? Oh, what have I done?

**Jesus:** Father! Forgive them, for they don't know what they do.

*Peter turns and sees Jesus. Judas never notices Jesus, but instead buries his head in his hands in despair.*

**Peter:** Lord! *(He turns again toward the audience)* Praise be to God my savior! I'm forgiven! Jesus has forgiven me!

**Judas:** Jesus! I can never be forgiven for what I've done to you. I've destroyed your life, and in doing so, I've destroyed my own life. How can I live without you? How can I live with this guilt? I cannot live with this guilt. *(He rushes down the aisle nearest him, shouting one last time:)* I cannot live with this guilt!

**Peter** *(leaping to the aisle nearest him and hurrying joyfully out, shouting):* I'm forgiven! I'm forgiven!

*The lights go out, Jesus is taken from the cross by soldiers, and they all leave the stage quietly.*

## SCENE 7

**Music:** Choose a powerful song about forgiveness, such as “Hosea (Come Back to Me)”.  
*During the song, all is dark, except a spotlight on the empty cross. Before the song ends, the spotlight on the cross moves to Jesus, who enters the stage triumphantly, dressed in a white robe, his arms out-stretched as they were on the cross. His hands and feet show blood from the nail wounds.*

**Jesus** (*moving his out-stretched arms toward the audience to beckon the people*): Come to me, all who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. I am the Good Shepherd, and you are my flock. By my wounds, you are healed. By my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant, your sins are forgiven.

*Peter leads all the disciples (minus Judas) from the back of the church down the center aisle, to the stage. Jesus greets all of them warmly with hugs and pats on the back. All the disciples sit around his feet, except Peter, whom Jesus hugs last.*

**Peter:** Master, Savior, when I didn't understand you, I stopped trusting you. But I understand your words now. For our sake, you were crucified, and in fulfillment of Scripture, God raised you from the dead, so that everyone who believes in you will receive forgiveness of sins. Your love for us is merciful, complete and unconditional!

**Jesus:** Simon, do you love me?

**Peter:** Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

**Jesus:** Feed my lambs. Simon, do you love me like a brother?

**Peter:** Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

**Jesus:** Tend my sheep. Simon, do you love me totally, as your Lord and your God?

**Peter:** Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you. Why have you asked me this three times?

**Jesus:** Because you betrayed me three times, and because you were forgiven three times. Peter, feed my sheep. (*Jesus hugs Peter again, then speaks to all the disciples and to the audience.*) All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Because you love me, I am in you and you are in me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. For behold! I am with you always!

**Music:** All sing (cast, singers, and audience) "Here I Am, Lord" or something equally effective that conveys commitment and love.