



## NEWSPAPER OP-ED FOR LENT/EASTER MEDIA KIT

### **“Christ’s Passion”**

When the word “passion” is used today, it usually refers to an intense feeling — of either love or hate. So, it may seem odd that Christians refer to the suffering and death of Jesus Christ as “the Passion.” Our modern word, “passion,” comes from the Latin word for suffering.

On the night when He was betrayed by Judas, Jesus was well aware of what was about to happen. The Gospel of St. Luke tells us that Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, where He prayed to God the Father, saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup [of suffering] from Me” (Luke 22:42 English Standard Version). As He prayed, He was in such great “agony” that “His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44).

So, why did Jesus submit to the suffering and humiliation that was to come, when He could have easily used His power as the Son of God to save Himself? He submitted to death on the cross because He wanted to save you.

Jesus’ Passion is about intense love — the love He feels for you and for all people. We all need Jesus. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” the Bible tells us in Romans 3:23. Remarkably, the Bible also says Jesus was “delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (Romans 4:25). Your sins have been paid for by Jesus. You’ve been declared “not guilty” by God because of Jesus. Believe it and it’s yours.

The 40 days leading up to Easter are called Lent. This is a time to pause, to reflect and to be sorry for our sins as we look forward to the joy of Easter morning, when Jesus Christ rose from the dead as victor over sin, death and the devil. This is the remedy for our lives filled with sins and disappointments, hurts and bad consciences. I tell you, in Jesus there is forgiveness and peace. Every day is a new beginning. “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

This Lent, I invite you to attend a congregation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Come hear Jesus’ own forgiving words spoken directly to you and learn more about Christ’s Passion. Bring your questions, your concerns and your worries, and lay them at the feet of the God who loves you so much that He sent His Son to suffer, die and rise again for you. You’ll find many kindred spirits, sinners all, forgiven.

In Christ Jesus,  
Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison  
President  
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod