

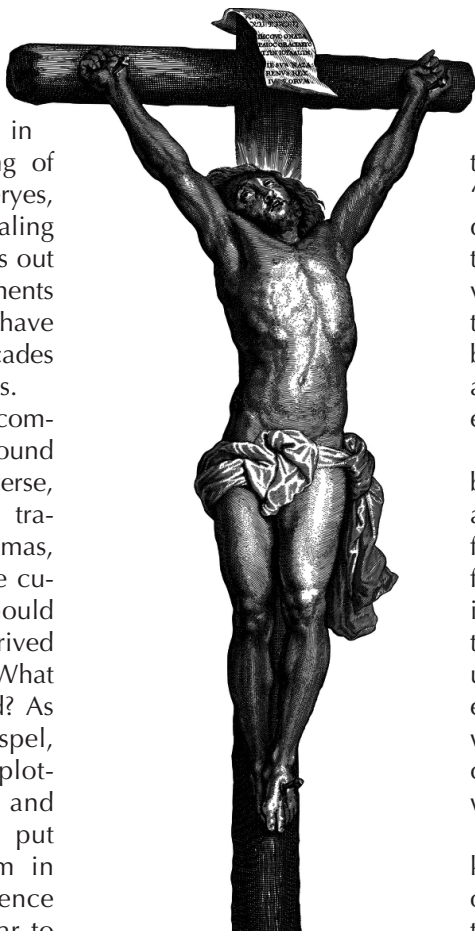
What Does It Take to Kill God?

If we imagine ourselves in the ultradramatic setting of Filipino and Korean teleseryes, we find ourselves dealing with weird and sometimes out of this world entanglements given the plot twists we have watched over the last decades of their rule on our screens.

Among the most common themes revolve around romance, parallel universe, science, medicine, time traveling, thriller, period dramas, and many others. But one curious plot that perhaps should be explored can be derived from our readings today: What does it take to kill a God? As we have heard in the Gospel, the Jews were intently plotting on cornering Jesus and eventually arrest him, put him on trial, throw him in jail, and then forever silence him through death similar to the fate of John the Baptist.

Almost two thousand years after, a famous 19th century philosopher accused humanity of killing God because of the abominable practices that dominated his time, but what does it really imply? In a moral sense, the absence of God permits everything, it allows everything.

If we are to revisit the preceding chapters of today's Gospel, chapters 5 and 6 of John narrate Jesus feeding the five thousand, walking on water, healing, and preaching.



Sir-Lien Hugh Tadeo

These episodes were clear manifestations of Jesus' nature as someone coming from God. He has the wisdom, the authority, the influence, and most of all the power. The verse: 'We know him' confirms that the people had an inkling who Jesus was based on what he had done and taught so far. Inviting people to believe in him, to trust in him so that they can follow him.

But why did they want to kill him? The First Reading

answers that the wicked wants to 'beset the just one' because 'he sets himself against our doings'. So, as in a teleserye, the good one becomes the villain and the evil one aspires to be the hero, masking evil to be an acceptable activity and allowing bad habits to flourish even more.

In the order of things, God being the creator and source of all that is good, we oftentimes forget that what he has planned for us is the best for us. We fall into despair because we seek things which will only bring us discontent, frustration, and emptiness. And as we see, the world more often than not still chooses the empty promises of wealth, power, and fame.

So, what does it take to kill a God? It takes killing ourselves. If we are to watch this on our television screens, we will be following ourselves fall into the pit of destruction, loneliness, and restlessness. Perhaps this was the scene Jesus saw while hanging on the cross. That as humanity watch God being crucified, the Lord witnessed nothing but the continuous ruin of humankind, thus, his heart overflowed with love and mercy uttering his famous words: 'Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.' Good thing, God does not give up on us even if we try to incessantly destroy ourselves.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon

(Ps 54 [53]: 3–4)

(Recited when there is no opening song.)

**O God, save me by your name;
by your power, defend my cause.
O God, hear my prayer; give
ear to the words of my mouth.**

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here.)

P—The Lord be with you.
All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

*(These [or similar words] may be used
to address the assembly.)*

P—Brothers and sisters, our readings for today give us hint of the approaching Passion of Jesus Christ. We are given the opportunity to concentrate our thoughts on that awful occasion brought about by the plots of wicked people. In the face of all that is human, may we remember God's Divine Presence. Let us be filled with cheerful certainty that in the Church, the time of sorrow will pass away and days of triumph and victory will return again.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.
(Pause)

P—Have mercy on us, O Lord.
All—For we have sinned against you.

P—Show us, O Lord, your mercy.
All—And grant us your salvation.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.
All—Lord, have mercy.
P—Christ, have mercy.
All—Christ, have mercy.
P—Lord, have mercy.
All—Lord, have mercy.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

O God, who have prepared fitting helps for us in our weakness, grant, we pray, that we may receive their healing effects with joy and reflect them in a holy way of life.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading

(Wis 2:1a, 12–22) *(Sit)*

The Book of Wisdom represents the whole history of people's dealings with their neighbors. Wickedness blinded those who were mistaken and who doubted. They did not learn the counsels of God. Let people uphold goodness and virtue and the observance of the Law.

A reading from the Book of the Wisdom

THE WICKED said among themselves, thinking not aright: "Let us beset the just one, because he is obnoxious to us; he sets himself against our doings, reproaches us for transgressions of the law and charges us with violations of our training. He professes to have knowledge of God and styles himself a child of the LORD. To us he is the censure of our thoughts; merely to see him is a hardship for us. Because his life is not like that of others, and different are his ways. He judges us debased; he holds aloof from our paths as from things impure. He calls blest the destiny of the just and boasts that God is his Father. Let us see whether his words be true; let us find out what will happen to him. For if the just one be the son of God, he will defend him and deliver him from the hand of his foes. With revilement and torture let us put him to the test that we may have proof of his gentleness and try his patience. Let us condemn him to a shameful death; for according to his own words, God will take care of him." These were their thoughts, but they erred; for

their wickedness blinded them, and they knew not the hidden counsels of God; neither did they count on a recompense of holiness nor discern the innocent souls' reward.

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 34)

R—The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.

1. The LORD confronts the evil-doers, to destroy remembrance of them from the earth. When the just cry out, the LORD hears them, and from all their distress he rescues them. **(R)**

2. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves. Many are the troubles of the just man, but out of them all the LORD delivers him. **(R)**

3. He watches over all his bones not one of them shall be broken. The LORD redeems the lives of his servants; no one incurs guilt who takes refuge in him.

Verse before the Gospel

(Mt 4:4b) *(Stand)*

All—One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

Gospel (Jn 7:1–2, 10, 25–30)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

All—Glory to you, O Lord.

JESUS moved about within Galilee; he did not wish to travel in Judea, because the Jews were trying to kill him. But the Jewish feast of Tabernacles was near.

But when his brothers had gone up to the feast, he himself also went up, not openly but as it were in secret.

Some of the inhabitants of Jerusalem said, "Is he not the one they are trying to kill? And look, he is speaking openly and they say nothing to him. Could the authorities have realized that he is the Christ? But we know where he is from. When the Christ comes, no one will

know where he is from." So Jesus cried out in the temple area as he was teaching and said, "You know me and also know where I am from. Yet I did not come on my own, but the one who sent me, whom you do not know, is true. I know him, because I am from him, and he sent me." So they tried to arrest him, but no one laid a hand upon him, because his hour had not yet come.

—The Gospel of the Lord.
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (*Sit*)

Prayer of the Faithful

P—We pray, O Father, for those persecuted, that they may find refuge and consolation through, with, and in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Let us pray:

R—Lord, hear our prayer.

C—Lord, be close to the brokenhearted, those who mourn, and those without hope. Comfort them and raise up their spirit. We pray. (**R**)

C—Bless those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness. Give them the joy of possessing the Kingdom of heaven. We pray: (**R**)

C—Bless those who are insulted, persecuted, and are maligned because of you. Let them rejoice, for their reward is great in heaven. We pray: (**R**)

C—Have mercy on the persecutors, the evildoers, and those whose hearts are hardened. Turn them from their evil ways that they may not suffer eternal desolation. We pray: (**R**)

C—Receive the souls of the victims of crimes and man's inhumanity. Give them the innocent souls' reward. We pray: (**R**)

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (*pause*). We pray: (**R**)

P—Almighty Father, your son Jesus Christ was persecuted, blasphemed, and branded as

a sinner by his detractors. Save those who take refuge in him and give them reward for their faithfulness. Grant this through the same Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

**LITURGY OF
THE EUCHARIST**



Presentation of the Gifts
(*Stand*)

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—May this sacrifice, almighty God, cleanse us by its mighty power and lead us to approach its source with ever greater purity.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

Preface II of Lent

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For you have given your children a sacred time for the renewing and purifying of their hearts, that, freed from disordered affections, they may so deal with the things of this passing world as to hold rather to the things that eternally endure.

And so, with all the Angels and Saints, we praise you, as without end we acclaim:

All—Holy, Holy, Holy... (Kneel)

Acclamation (*Stand*)

All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion
(*Kneel*)

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon
(*Eph 1: 7*)

In Christ, we have redemption by his Blood, and forgiveness of our sins, in accord with the riches of his grace.

Prayer after Communion
(*Stand*)

P—Let us pray. (*Pause*)

Grant, we pray, O Lord, that, as we pass from old to new, so, with former ways left behind, we may be renewed in holiness of mind.

Through Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Prayer over the People

P—Bow down for the blessing.
(*Pause*)

Look upon your servants, O Lord, and in your goodness protect with heavenly assistance those who trust in your mercy.

Through Christ our Lord
All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—The Mass is ended. Go in peace.

All—Thanks be to God.



PRAYER TO THE SACRED HEART *of Jesus*

Divine Jesus, you have said, "Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," behold me kneeling at your feet, filled with a lively faith and confidence in the promises dictated by your Sacred Heart and pronounced by Your adorable lips. I come to ask this favor: *(Here silently mention your petitions).*

To whom can I turn if not to you whose Heart is the source of all graces and merits? Where should I seek if not in the treasure which contains all the riches of your kindness and mercy? Where should I knock if not at the door through which God gives himself to us and through which we go to God? I have recourse to You, Heart of Jesus. In you I find consolation when afflicted,

protection when persecuted, strength when burdened with trials, and light in doubt and darkness.

Dear Jesus, I firmly believe that you can grant me the grace I implore, even though it should require a miracle. You have only to will it, and my prayer will be granted. I admit that I am most unworthy of your favors, but this is not a reason for me to be discouraged. You are the God of Mercy and you will not refuse a contrite heart. Cast upon me a look of mercy, I beg of you, and your kind Heart will find in my miseries and weaknesses a reason for granting my prayers.

O Sacred Heart, whatever may be your decision with regard to my request, I will never stop adoring, loving, praising and serving you. My Lord Jesus, be pleased to accept this my act of perfect resignation to the decrees of your adorable Heart which I sincerely desire may be fulfilled by me and all your creatures forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I know that there is but one thing impossible to you: to be without pity to those who are suffering or in distress. Look upon me, I beg of you, dear Jesus, and grant me the grace for which I humbly implore you through the Immaculate Heart of your most sorrowful Mother. You have entrusted me to her as her child, and her prayers are all-powerful with you. Amen.

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