

REFLECTION

Death of the Good Shepherd.

Jesus said: 'I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.' Jesus did not have to suffer and die. He had a choice. He chose to suffer and die because he cared about the flock God had entrusted to him. What Jesus wants from us is not our suffering, but a life of love and service. Such a life will inevitably bring suffering. But Jesus supports all those who follow him down the road of faithful love and generous service.

Prayer after Communion:

Nourished with these sacred gifts, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, just as through the death of your Son you have brought us to hope for what we believe, so by his Resurrection you may lead us to where you call. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SOLEMN BLESSING

The Lord be with you.

May almighty God bless you,
the Father, and the Son, and Holy Spirit.

Go forth, the Mass is ended.

And with your spirit.

Amen.

Thanks be to God.

Prayer

How painful is the cross you bear, my God and Saviour Lord.
It hurts to see you hanging there,
your side pierced by a mighty sword.
Yet, I, in my own humble way, would take your place and cry,
"My God, you have forsaken me and I do not know why!"
I ache with sorrow, fear, and dread as dying draws me near.
Your cross is hard to bear.
And I am just a tiny one, with little courage left to spare.
Come to my aid, increase my love that I might fully care
to follow in your way and bring with me
all those whom you have called to be
kingdom dwellers, lights to the world, people of God
who pray as they play; sing as they trod
home to you, our Saviour God. Amen.

Passion Sunday B



Entrance Antiphon

John 12:1,12-13; Ps 23:9-10

Six days before the Passover, when the Lord came into the city of Jerusalem, the children ran to meet him; in their hands they carried palm branches and with a loud voice cried out:

Hosanna in the highest! Blessed are you, who have come in your abundant mercy!

O gates, lift high your heads; grow higher, ancient doors. Let him enter, the king of glory! Who is this king of glory? He, the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed are you, who have come in your abundant mercy!

'Greater love no man has than he who lays down his life for his friends.'
This is the week Christ lived out the truth of these words. He took on himself our sins and the sins of the world.

Lord Jesus, you were pierced for our sins. Lord have mercy.
Lord Jesus, you bore our sufferings and sorrows. Christ have mercy.
Lord Jesus, through your wounds we are healed. Lord have mercy.

Let us pray:

Almighty ever-living God, who as an example of humility for the human race to follow caused our Saviour to take flesh and submit to the Cross, graciously grant that we may heed his lesson of patient suffering and so merit a share in his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 50:4-7

The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue. So that I may know how to reply to the wearied he provides me with speech. Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple. The Lord has opened my ear. For my part, I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard; I did not cover my face against insult and spittle. The Lord comes to my help, so that I am untouched by the insults. So, too, I set my face like flint; I know I shall not be shamed.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 21

Response: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.

All who see me deride me.
They curl their lips, they toss their heads.
'He trusted in the Lord, let him save him,
let him release him if this is his friend.'

R/.

Many dogs have surrounded me,
 a band of the wicked beset me.
 They tear holes in my hands and my feet,
 I can count everyone of my bones. **R/.**
 They divide my clothing among them.
 They cast lots for my robe.
 O Lord, do not leave me alone,
 my strength, make haste to help me! **R/.**
 I will tell of your name to my brethren
 and praise you where they are assembled.
 'You who fear the Lord give him praise;
 sons of Jacob, give him glory.
 Reverse him, Israel's sons.' **R/.**

SECOND READING

From the second letter of St Paul to the Philippians. Philippians 2:6-11
 His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God
 but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as
 men are; and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting
 death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name
 which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth
 and in the underworld, should bend their knee at the name of Jesus and
 that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God
 the Father.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Philippians 2:8-9

**Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!
 Christ was humbler yet,
 even to accepting death, death on a cross.
 But God raised him high and gave him the name
 which is above all names.
 Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!**

GOSPEL

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**
 The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark. 14:1-15:47
Glory to you, Lord.

It was two days before the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread,
 and the chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus
 by some trick and have him put to death. For they said: **"It must not be
 during the festivities, or there will be a disturbance among the
 people."**

Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper; he was at dinner
 when a woman came in with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, pure
 nard. She broke the jar and poured the ointment on his head. Some who
 were there said to one another indignantly: **"Why this waste of ointment?"**

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and
 in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the
 Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was
 crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third
 day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is
 seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will
 come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the
 holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of
 sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.**

Offertory:

Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to
 God, the almighty Father.

**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 Offering

Through the Passion of your Only Begotten Son, O Lord, may our
 reconciliation with you be near at hand, so that, though we do not merit it
 by our own deeds, yet by this sacrifice made once for all, we may feel
 already the effects of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Preface:

The Lord be with you.

And with your spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right and just.

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,
 through Christ our Lord.

For, though innocent,
 he suffered willingly for sinners
 and accepted unjust condemnation to save the guilty.
 His Death has washed away our sins,
 and his Resurrection has purchased our justification.
 And so, with all the Angels, we praise you,
 as in joyful celebration we acclaim:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your
 glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name
 of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

The mystery of faith.

**Save us, Saviour of the world,
 for by your Cross and Resurrection
 you have set us free.**

Communion Antiphon:

**Father, if this chalice cannot pass
 without my drinking it,
 your will be done. Mk 26:42**

They led him out to crucify him. They enlisted a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull.

They offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he refused it. Then they crucified him, and shared out his clothing, casting lots to decide what each should get. It was the third hour when they crucified him. The inscription giving the charge against him read: 'The King of the Jews.' And they crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said: **"Aha! So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself: come down from the cross!"**

The chief priests and the scribes mocked him among themselves in the same way. They said: **"He saved others, he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now, for us to see it and believe."**

Even those who were crucified with him taunted him. When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" This means: 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood by heard this they said: **"Listen, he is calling on Elijah."**

Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink saying: **"Wait and see if Elijah will come to take him down."** But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

(All kneel and pause a moment)

And the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The centurion, who was standing in front of him, had seen how he had died, and he said: "In truth this man was a son of God."

There were some women watching from a distance. Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary who was the mother of James the younger and Joset, and Salome. These used to follow him and look after him when he was in Galilee. And there were many other women there who had come up to Jerusalem with him. It was now evening, and since it was Preparation Day (that is, the vigil of the Sabbath), there came Joseph of Arimathaea, a prominent member of the Council, who himself lived in the hope of seeing the kingdom of God, and he boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate, astonished that he should have died so soon, summoned the centurion and enquired if he was already dead. Having been assured of this by the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph who brought a shroud, took Jesus down from the cross, wrapped him in the shroud and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of Joset were watching and took note where he was laid.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Ointment like this could have been sold for over three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor;" and they were angry with her. But Jesus said: "Leave her alone. Why are you upsetting her? What she has done for me is one of the good works. You have the poor with you always, and you can be kind to them whenever you wish, but you will not always have me. She has done what was in her power to do; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. I tell you solemnly, wherever throughout all the world the Good News is proclaimed, what she has done will be told also, in remembrance of her."

Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, approached the chief priests with an offer to hand Jesus over to them. They were delighted to hear it, and promised to give him money; and he looked for a way of betraying him when the opportunity should occur.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, his disciples said to him: **"Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?"** So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them: "Go into the city and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and say to the owner of the house which he enters: 'The Master says: Where is my dining room in which I can eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room furnished with couches, all prepared. Make the preparations for us there." The disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover. When evening came he arrived with the Twelve. And while they were at table eating, Jesus said: "I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray me, one of you eating with me." They were distressed and asked him, one after another: "Not I, surely?" He said to them: "It is one of the Twelve, one who is dipping into the same dish with me. Yes, the Son of Man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!"

And as they were eating he took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to them, saying: "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them, and all drank from it, and he said to them: "This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many. I tell you solemnly, I shall not drink any more wine until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God." After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them: "You will all lose faith, for the scripture says: 'I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.' However after my resurrection I shall go before you to Galilee." Peter said: "Even if all lose faith, I will not." And Jesus said to him: "I tell you solemnly, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will have disowned me three times." But he repeated still more earnestly: "If I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And they all said the same.

They came to a small estate called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples: "Stay here while I pray." Then he took Peter and James and

John with him. And a sudden fear came over him, and great distress. And he said to them: "My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here, and keep awake." And going on a little further he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this hour might pass him by. He said: "Abba Father! Everything is possible for you. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it." He came back and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter: "Simon, are you asleep? Had you not the strength to keep awake one hour? You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came back and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy; and they could find no answer for him. He came back a third time and said to them: "You can sleep on now and take your rest. It is all over. The hour has come. Now the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is close at hand already." Even while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came up with a number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the traitor had arranged a signal with them. He had said: "The one I kiss, he is the man. Take him in charge, and see he is well guarded when you lead him away." So when the traitor came, he went straight up to Jesus and said: "Rabbi!" and kissed him. The others seized him and took him in charge. Then one of the bystanders drew his sword and struck out at the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus spoke: "Am I a brigand that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I was among you teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid hands on me. But this is to fulfil the scriptures." And they all deserted him and ran away. A young man who followed him had nothing on but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the cloth in their hands and ran away naked. They led Jesus off to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes assembled there. Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the high priest's palace, and was sitting with the attendants warming himself at the fire.

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus on which they might pass the death-sentence. But they could not find any. Several, indeed, brought false evidence against him, but their evidence was conflicting. Some stood up and submitted this false evidence against him: **"We heard him say: 'I am going to destroy this Temple made by human hands, and in three days build another, not made by human hands.'"** But even on this point their evidence was conflicting. The high priest then stood up before the whole assembly and put this question to Jesus: "Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?" But he was silent and made no answer at all. The high priest put a second question to him: "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?" Jesus said: "I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of

heaven." The high priest tore his robes, and said: "What need of witnesses have we now? You heard the blasphemy. What is your finding?" And they all gave their verdict he deserved to die. Some of them started spitting at him and, blindfolding him, began hitting him with their fists and shouting: **"Play the prophet!"** And the attendants rained blows on him. While Peter was down below in the courtyard, one of the high priest's servant-girls came up. She saw Peter warming himself there, stared at him and said: "You too were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth." But he denied it, saying: "I do not know, I do not understand what you are talking about." And he went out into the forecourt. The servant-girl saw him and again started telling the bystanders: "This fellow is one of them." But he again denied it. A little later the bystanders themselves said to Peter: **"You are one of them for sure! Why, you are a Galilean."** But he started calling curses on himself and swearing: "I do not know the man you speak of." At that moment the cock crew for the second time, and Peter recalled how Jesus had said to him: 'Before the cock crows twice, you will have disowned me three times.' And he burst into tears.

First thing in the morning, the chief priests together with the elders and scribes, in short the whole Sanhedrin, had their plan ready. They had Jesus bound and took him away and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him: "Are you the king of the Jews?" He answered: "It is you who say it." And the chief priests brought many accusations against him. Pilate questioned him again: "Have you no reply at all? See how many accusations they are bringing against you!" But to Pilate's amazement, Jesus made no further reply.

At festival time Pilate used to release a prisoner for them, anyone they asked for. Now a man called Barabbas was then in prison with the rioters who had committed murder during the uprising. When the crowd went up and began to ask Pilate the customary favour, Pilate answered them: "Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews?" For he realised it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over. The chief priests, however, had incited the crowd to demand that he should release Barabbas for them instead.

Then Pilate spoke again: "But in that case, what am I to do with the man you call king of the Jews?" They shouted back: **"Crucify him!"** Pilate asked them: "Why? What harm has he done?" But they shouted all the louder: **"Crucify him!"**

So Pilate, anxious to placate the crowd, released Barabbas for them and, having ordered Jesus to be scourged, handed him over to be crucified. The soldiers led him away to the inner part of the palace, that is, the Praetorium, and called the whole cohort together. They dressed him up in purple, twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on him. And they began saluting him: **"Hail, king of the Jews!"** They struck his head with a reed and spat on him; and they went down on their knees to do him homage. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the purple and dressed him in his own clothes.