

Sunday Message

5 APRIL 2020

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

THE WORD

Year A • Psalter Week 2

1. THE SOLEMN ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. Hosanna in the highest.

As the Lord entered the holy city, the children of the Hebrews proclaimed the resurrection of life.

Waving their branches of palm, they cried: Hosanna in the Highest.

When the people heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, they went out to meet him.

Waving their branches of palm, they cried: Hosanna in the Highest.

2. THE SIMPLE ENTRANCE ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

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!

COLLECT

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 Isaiah 50:4-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah. 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.

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 every one 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; all sons of Jacob, give him glory. Revere him, Israel's sons." (R.)

SECOND READING Philippians 2:6-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians.

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 the 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

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 Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)

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.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

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.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Father, if this chalice cannot pass without my drinking it, your will be done.

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.



HOLY WEEK BEGINS

(MATTHEW 26:14 – 27:66)

With Passion (or Palm) Sunday we begin the most solemn week of the Church's year, and we listen to Matthew's account of the passion of Jesus.

We are accustomed to the Stations of the Cross and to hymns which dwell on the sufferings of Jesus, but when we read or listen to the narrative of these events, we notice that there is little, if any, stress put on the physical pain he endured. The evangelist is more concerned to show that Jesus is faithful to his mission, as the mental or psychological struggle in Gethsemane shows. The crown of thorns is an ironic mockery on the part of the soldiers: they are, unconsciously, correct in addressing him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" while they make fun of him. Jesus' cry from the cross, "Why have you deserted me?" is best understood as an expression of his feeling abandoned, and in this he is identified with all those who feel bereft and alone.

Matthew relates dramatic events which accompany the death of Jesus, such as the earthquake, the opening of the tombs and the appearing of dead people: these are his way of telling us that with the death of Jesus, the general resurrection has begun. The women from Galilee are the link throughout, being present, at a distance, at the crucifixion, at the burial, and later at the tomb on Easter morning. Matthew alone mentions the setting of the guard and the sealing of the tomb: thus he answers later objections to the proclaiming of the resurrection, that the body of Jesus was missing because it had been removed. ■

REFLECT

The community for which Matthew wrote his version of the Gospel was made up largely of Jewish Christians, and so the argument with the synagogue over the person of Jesus was especially bitter, as family quarrels often, sadly, are. There was also a concern to minimise the responsibility of the Roman authorities for the death of Jesus: so in this account, we find Pilate's wife reporting a dream she has had about Jesus which upset her: this reminds us that Joseph received messages from

God in this way in the chapters which told about Jesus' birth. Pilate himself washes his hands of the matter and the people present are portrayed as accepting full responsibility for Jesus being condemned: "His blood be upon us and on our children!"

This text is one of those which have been tragically and cruelly misappropriated down the centuries to justify persecuting later generations of Jewish people. Despite the horrors of the Holocaust

SAY

Christ was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross.

(Philippians 2:8)

LEARN

The passion narrative is the earliest connected unit in the Gospel tradition.

The Pharisees are mentioned only once in all the four accounts of the passion: that is in connection with the request to Pilate to set a guard at the tomb of Jesus.

It is the chief priests, the scribes and the elders who plot and secure the death of Jesus.

DO

Take time to contemplate the cross: remember that it is Jesus' commitment to his mission, his obedience to the Father, which redeems us, not his physical suffering.

