

SSRA.UK

Sunday Scriptures for Reading Aloud

Readings for
Palm Sunday to Easter Day

2024

Palm Sunday 24 March
Maundy Thursday 28 March
Good Friday 29 March
Easter Day 31 March

**encouraging more confident participation
in the public reading of scripture by more readers**

**encouraging a greater appreciation
of the public reading of scripture by more hearers**

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The Palm Sunday Passion reading
is set out for a single voice

The Maundy Thursday theme in Year B
is 'service to others', following on from 'Lamb of God'
in Year A, and with 'bread of life' to follow in Year C

The Good Friday Passion reading
is divided into three sections, for three readers

SSRA.uk has readings in this format for every Sunday
of the three year cycle, dated and available both online
and in print, taking all the hard work out of finding,
choosing, printing and distributing the Sunday morning
scripture readings, whilst also encouraging more
confident participation in the public reading of scripture
by more readers, and encouraging greater appreciation
of the public reading of scripture by more hearers;
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SUNDAY 24 MARCH

Palm Sunday

PALM PROCESSION – *Mark 11.1-2,7-10*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Mark.

Jesus and the disciples
were approaching Jerusalem.

When they reached Bethany,
near the Mount of Olives,

Jesus gave instructions
to two of his disciples

to go on ahead
into the village,

and to bring back a foal
that they would find there.

They brought the foal to Jesus,
and made a saddle from their cloaks,
and Jesus sat on it.

Many people now
spread their cloaks on the road,
and others spread leaves
that they had cut in the fields.

Those going ahead of Jesus,
and those following behind,
shouted out, 'Hosanna!

Blessed
is the one who comes
in the name of the Lord!

Blessed
is the coming kingdom
of our ancestor David!

Hosanna
in the highest heaven!

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

MAIN LITURGY

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 50.4-8a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord God
has taught me wisdom,
that I may speak words of comfort
to those who are weary.

Morning by morning,
the Lord God awakens me,
that I may learn wisdom
as a servant of the Lord.

When I face persecution and violence,
I do not hide my face, or turn away,
for the Lord God is my helper,
and I will not
be defeated or ashamed.

I set my face like flint,
for my protector,
the one who brings justice,
is near.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Philippians 2.5-11*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians.

Let Christ Jesus
be your example.
He did not regard
his equality with God
as something to be exploited,

but emptied himself,
taking the form of a servant.

Born in human form,
he humbled himself,
in faithful obedience,
even to death on the cross.

And now, God has highly exalted him,
and has given him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus,
all shall bow down,
in heaven, on earth, and under the earth,
and declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory
of God the Father.

This is the word of the Lord.

PASSION – *Mark 14.1 - 15.47*

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Mark.

The chief priests and the scribes
were looking for a way
to arrest Jesus,
and execute him.

But they feared a riot
if they made the arrest
in a public place,
or during the Festival of the Passover,
which was only two days away.

Jesus was at Bethany, outside Jerusalem,
in the house of Simon the leper.

As Jesus sat at the table to eat,
a woman came,
with a carved
alabaster jar

of valuable
perfumed
ointment.

She broke open the jar,
and poured out the ointment
on Jesus' head.

Some of those present
spoke angrily to her,
saying that the ointment
had been wasted,
when it could have been sold,
for a whole year's wages,
and the money
given to the poor.

But Jesus said, 'Let her alone.
She has done
a beautiful thing for me.
You always
have the poor with you,
and you can help them
whenever you wish;
but you will not always have me.
She has done what she could;
she has anointed my body early,
for burial.
And she will be remembered
throughout the world
for her good deed,
wherever the good news is proclaimed.'

Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve,
then went to the chief priests,
offering to betray Jesus to them.

The chief priests were glad
to receive this offer,
and promised Judas payment.

And Judas began to look
for an opportunity
to betray Jesus.

On the first day
of the festival, the day when
the Passover lamb is sacrificed,
the disciples asked Jesus where they should
make preparations
for the Passover meal.

Jesus sent two of the disciples
into the city,
saying that they would see someone
carrying a jar of water into a house;

they should ask the owner of that house
to show them a guest room
where their teacher, and his disciples,
could eat the Passover meal;

they would be shown
a large upstairs room, furnished and ready,
and they should make preparations there.

The disciples went to the city,
and found everything as Jesus had told them;
and they prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening,
Jesus and the twelve
took their places at the table.

While they were eating,
Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you,
one of you will betray me,
one of you here, eating with me.'

The disciples were distressed,
and began to say to him,
one after another, 'Surely, not I?'

Jesus said to them, 'It is one of the twelve,
one who is eating
at this table.

The Son of Man will go
as it is written.

And for the one who betrays him,
it would have been better
not to have been born.'

While they were eating,
Jesus took bread,
and after giving thanks,
he broke it,
and gave it to his disciples,
saying, 'Take, and eat;
this is my body.'

Then he took the cup,
and after giving thanks,
he gave it to them,
and they all drank from it.

And he said, 'This is my blood, of the covenant,
which is poured out for many.

And I will not drink
the fruit of the vine again
until I drink it
in the kingdom of God.'

When they had sung a hymn,
they went out
to the Mount of Olives.

There, Jesus said to them, 'You will all abandon me,
as it is written: "I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered."

But after I am raised up,
I will go ahead of you
to Galilee.'

Peter said to Jesus, 'Even if all others
abandon you,
I will not.'

Jesus said to Peter, 'This very night,
before the cock crows twice,
you will deny me three times.'

But Peter insisted all the more, 'Even if I must
die with you, I will not deny you.'

And they all
said the same.

They went to a place
called Gethsemane.
And Jesus said
to his disciples, 'Stay here while I pray.'
Jesus took with him
Peter, James, and John.
And he became troubled,
and distressed,
saying to them, 'My soul
is consumed with grief, to the point of death.
Stay here, and keep watch.'
And going a little further,
he fell to the ground,
and prayed that, if it were possible,
the hour might pass from him;
saying 'Abba, Father,
for you
all things are possible;
remove this cup from me;
yet not my will, but yours, be done.'
Jesus returned
to Peter, James, and John,
and found them sleeping.
Jesus said to Peter, 'Could you not
keep awake one hour?
Stay awake, and pray,
that you may not
come into the time of trial;
for the spirit indeed is willing,
but the flesh is weak.'
Jesus left them again,
and prayed once more,
saying the same words.
And he returned to them again,
and found them sleeping,
for their eyes were heavy;
and they did not know
what to say to him.
And Jesus returned a third time,
and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping,
and taking your rest?
Enough. The hour has come,
and the Son of Man is betrayed
into the hands of sinners.
Let us be going;
see, my betrayer is at hand.'

While Jesus
was still speaking,
Judas, one of the twelve, arrived,
with a crowd,
with swords and clubs,
from the chief priests,
the scribes, and the elders.
Judas, the betrayer,
had arranged a signal with them,
saying, 'I will greet him
with a kiss.
Then you can arrest him,
and lead him away, under guard.'
So Judas
now approached Jesus,
and said, 'Teacher,'
and greeted him
with a kiss.
And they took hold of Jesus,
and arrested him.
Someone took a sword,
and struck
the servant of the high priest,
cutting off his ear.
Jesus said, 'Day after day
I was in your temple,
teaching,
and you did not
arrest me.
And now you come out
with swords and clubs
to arrest me
like an outlaw.
But let the scriptures
be fulfilled.'
All the disciples
now deserted Jesus,
and fled.
One young man amongst them
had been wearing a single garment
of linen cloth.
Those who had arrested Jesus
caught hold of it,
as they tried to arrest him,
and he fled
without it.

Those who had arrested Jesus
took him
to the high priest.
The elders, the scribes,
and the chief priests,
had all assembled.
Peter had followed
at a distance,
into the courtyard
of the high priest;
and he was sitting with the guards,
warming himself
at the fire.
The chief priests, and the whole council,
were looking for testimony against Jesus,
to put him to death;
but they found none.
Many gave false testimony against Jesus,
but their testimony did not agree.
Some stood up,
and gave false testimony against him,
saying, 'We heard him say,
"I will destroy this temple,
that is made by human hands,
and in three days, I will build another,
not made by human hands."'”
But even on this point,
their testimony did not agree.
Then the high priest stood,
and demanded of Jesus, 'How do you respond
to what they are saying?
Have you no answer?'
But Jesus was silent,
making no reply.
The high priest asked him, 'Are you the Messiah,
the Son of the Holy One?'
Jesus said, 'I am; and you will see
the Son of Man, seated
at the right hand of power, and coming
with the clouds of heaven.'
Then the high priest tore his robes,
and said, 'We need no further witnesses.
You have heard his blasphemy.
What is your verdict?'
And they all condemned him
as deserving death.
Some spat on him,
blindfolded him,
beat him,
and said to him, 'Speak like a prophet!'
And the guards also
took him and beat him.

One of the women who worked for the high priest
walked past
where Peter was keeping warm
in the courtyard below.
She looked closely at Peter,
then said to him, 'You were with
Jesus of Nazareth.'
But Peter denied it,
saying, 'I do not know
what you mean.'
And he moved
to the outer courtyard.
And the cock crowed.
The woman saw Peter again,
and said to those who were standing there,
'This man is one of them.'
Again, Peter denied it.
A short time later,
those who were standing there
said to Peter, 'Surely you are with him,
for you are a Galilean.'
Peter began to curse,
and swore with an oath,
'I do not know this man.'
And at that very moment,
the cock crowed
a second time.
And Peter remembered
that Jesus had said to him,
'Before the cock crows twice,
you will deny me three times.'
And Peter broke down and wept.

As soon as it was morning,
the chief priests consulted
with the elders, and the scribes,
and the whole council.
Then they bound Jesus, led him away,
and handed him over to Pilate.

Pilate asked Jesus, 'Are you
the King of the Jews?'
Jesus replied, 'You have said it.'
Then the chief priests made
many accusations
against Jesus.
Pilate asked Jesus, 'Have you no answer?
See how many charges
they bring against you.'
But Jesus made no further reply.

Now it had become a custom
that at the festival
Pilate would release a prisoner,
whichever one
the people demanded.
Amongst the prisoners
was Barabbas;
he had committed a murder,
as one of the rebels
during an insurrection.
The crowd began to ask Pilate
to release a prisoner,
in keeping with his custom.
Pilate had now recognised
that it was out of envy
that the chief priests
had handed Jesus over to him.
So Pilate said to the crowd, 'Shall I release for you
the King of the Jews?'
But the chief priests stirred up the crowd
to ask Pilate to release Barabbas instead.
Pilate addressed the crowd again,
saying, 'What then
shall I do
with the one you call
the King of the Jews?'
And they shouted back, 'Crucify him!'
Pilate asked them, 'Why,
what evil has he done?'
But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!'
So to appease the crowd,
Pilate released Barabbas.
And after
having Jesus flogged,
Pilate handed Jesus over
to be crucified.

The soldiers
led Jesus into the courtyard,
and called together
the whole guard.
They twisted some thorns
into a crown,
and put it on him.
They put him
in a purple cloak,
and began to salute him, saying,
'Hail, King of the Jews!'
They struck his head with a reed,
spat upon him,
and knelt down, as if
in homage to him.
And after they had mocked him,
they removed the purple cloak from him,
put his own clothes on him,
and led him out
to crucify him.

Simon, from north Africa,
the father of Alexander and Rufus,
was coming in from the country;
and they took him,
and made him carry the cross.

They brought Jesus
to the place called Golgotha,
The Place of the Skull.
They offered him wine, mixed with myrrh;
but he did not take it.
And after crucifying him,
they divided his clothes between them,
casting lots
to decide what each should take.

It was nine o'clock in the morning
when they crucified him.
The inscription
of the charge against him
read, 'The King of the Jews.'
And with him,
they crucified two thieves,
one on his right, and one on his left.
Those who passed by
mocked him,
shaking their heads,
and saying, 'You said you could
destroy the temple
and build it in three days;
so save yourself;
come down from the cross.'
The chief priests and the scribes
also mocked him
amongst themselves,
saying, 'He saved others,
but he cannot save himself!
If he is the Messiah, the King of Israel,
let him come down from the cross,
and we will believe in him.'
And those who were crucified with him
also taunted him.

At midday,
darkness came over the whole land
for three hours.
Then Jesus cried out,
with a loud voice,
'My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me?'
Jesus cried out in Aramaic,
addressing God as 'Eli'.
Some of the bystanders
thought he was calling
for Elijah.
One of them brought a sponge,
filled it with sour wine,
put it on a stick,
and held it up for Jesus to drink,
saying, 'Wait,
let us see
whether Elijah
will come to save him.'
Then Jesus
let out
a loud cry;
and breathed his last.
And the curtain of the temple
was torn in two.
When the centurion, who stood facing Jesus,
saw that in this way,
he breathed his last,
he said, 'Truly this was
the Son of God.'

Amongst the women, watching from a distance,
were Mary Magdalene, and
Salome, and
Mary the mother of Joseph and the younger James.
They had followed
and supported Jesus
in Galilee.
And many other women, who had
travelled with him to Jerusalem,
were also there.

It was the day of Preparation,
that is, the day before the sabbath.
Joseph of Arimathea
was a respected member of the council,
who was, himself,
waiting expectantly
for the coming of the kingdom of God.
When evening came,
he found the courage
to go to Pilate, to ask
for the body of Jesus.
Pilate had not expected
that Jesus would already be dead;
but when Pilate had confirmed,
with a centurion,
that Jesus had indeed
been dead for some time,
Pilate granted the body
to Joseph,
as requested.
Then Joseph
bought
some linen cloth,
took down the body,
wrapped it in the cloth,
and laid it in a tomb
that had been carved out
from the rock.
Then he rolled a stone
across the entrance to the tomb.
Mary Magdalene,
and Mary the mother of Joseph,
saw where the body was laid.

The Passion of the Lord.

THURSDAY 28 MARCH

Maundy Thursday

FIRST READING – *Micah 6.6-8*

A reading from the book of the prophet Micah.

What shall I bring, as an offering, to the Lord,
as I bow down

before God most high?

Shall I bring burnt-offerings,

calves a year old,
thousands of rams,
rivers of oil,

or even my firstborn,

the fruit of my body,

for the transgressions of my soul?

No, for the offering

the Lord requires of us

is this:

to do justice,

to love kindness,

and to walk humbly

with our God.

This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *Romans 12.1-2,9-20a,21*

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,

as your response

to God's great mercy,

to present your bodies

as a living sacrifice,

holy and acceptable to God.

Do not be conformed

to the ways

of this world,

but be transformed,

by the renewing of your minds,

towards

the perfect

will of God.

Let your love

be genuine.

Reject all that is evil,

and cling to all that is good.

With ever-greater devotion,

honour one another,

and serve the Lord.

Rejoice in faith,

be patient in suffering,

and persevere in prayer.

Support each other in need,

and offer care to everyone.

Bless those who persecute you;

bless them, and do not curse them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice,

and weep with those who weep.

Live in harmony with one another;

and find your place amongst the humble,

not amongst the arrogant.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil,

but always do what is right

in the sight of all.

Do all that you can

to live at peace

with everyone.

When you are wronged,

do not seek revenge.

Instead, leave room

for the judgement of God.

For the scripture says, 'Retribution is mine;

I will repay, says the Lord.'

So, as the scripture

also says,

if your enemies are hungry, feed them;

if they are thirsty, give them something to drink.

Do not be overcome

by evil,

but overcome evil

with good.

This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 13.4-9,12-16a, 34-35*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ

according to John.

During the supper,

Jesus left the table,

took off his outer robe,

and tied a towel around his waist.

Then he poured water into a basin,

and began to wash the disciples' feet,

and to wipe them with the towel.

He came to Simon Peter, who said, 'Lord,

surely, I cannot let you

wash my feet.'

Jesus said, 'Soon you will understand

that I must wash you clean

if you are to be

my disciple.'

Simon Peter said, 'Then Lord, wash

not only my feet,

but my hands

and my head also!'

After Jesus had washed their feet,

he put on his robe,

returned to the table,

and said to them:

'Do you understand what I have done for you?

You call me Teacher and Lord;

and as your Lord and Teacher,

I have set you an example.

You should do for one another

what I have done for you,

for no servant

is greater than their master.

And I give you this new commandment:

as I have loved you,

so you

must love

one another.

By this, everyone will know

that you are my disciples:

if you have love

for one another.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

FRIDAY 29 MARCH

Good Friday

FIRST READING – Isaiah 53.3-5

He was despised
and rejected.
He knew anguish
and pain.
We counted him as worthless,
as struck down
by God.
We turned our faces
from him.
Yet truly
he bore our anguish,
and carried our pain.
He was wounded
for our transgressions,
and crushed
for our iniquities.
He bore the punishment
that makes us whole.
And by his wounds,
we are healed.

SECOND READING – Hebrews 4.14-16; 5.7-10a

We have
a great high priest, who has
ascended
into heaven,
Jesus, the Son of God.
And he is able to sympathise
with our weakness,
for he himself
has been tested,
in every way, as we are -
yet without sin.
So let us trust in him,
and approach the throne of grace
with confidence,
that we may receive
mercy,
and find
grace to help
in time of need.
In the days of his earthly life,
Jesus offered up prayers,
with loud cries, and tears,
to the one who was
able to rescue him
from death.
And his prayer was heard,
in his reverent submission
to the will of the Father.
Even as the Son,
he grew
in devotion
through all
he learned and endured.
And when he had
accomplished
and
completed
all things,
he was declared by God
to be the eternal high priest,
and has become
the source
of eternal salvation
for all who trust in him.

*Good Friday Passion Readings
begin on the next page*

FRIDAY 29 MARCH

Good Friday Passion Reading Part 1

John 18:1-27

Jesus went
with his disciples
to a garden
on the far side
of the Kidron valley.
Judas
also knew the place,
because Jesus
would often meet there
with his disciples.
So Judas led the soldiers and the temple guards there,
with weapons and torches.
Jesus, knowing what was happening,
stepped forward, and asked them, 'Who is it
that you are looking for?'
They answered, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'
Jesus said, 'I am he.'
And they stepped back
and fell to the ground.
Jesus asked them again, 'Who is it
that you are looking for?'
And again they said, 'Jesus of Nazareth.'
Jesus replied, 'I say again, I am he.
Now let these others go.'
In this way,
he fulfilled the words
he had earlier
spoken in prayer:
'I have protected those
you entrusted to me.'
Simon Peter
now drew his sword,
and struck
the servant
of the high priest,
cutting off his right ear.
Jesus said, 'Put your sword away,
for I must surely drink
from the cup
that the Father
has given me.'
Then the soldiers
and the temple guards
arrested Jesus,
and bound him.
They took him first to Annas,
the father-in-law
of Caiaphas,
the high priest that year.
Caiaphas was the one who had said
that it was better
to have one person die
for the people.

Simon Peter,
and another disciple,
followed Jesus.
The other disciple
was known
to the high priest,
and was able to follow Jesus
all the way into the courtyard.
But Peter was left standing outside the gate,
until the other disciple
went out
and spoke to the woman who was
guarding the gate.
The woman said to Peter, 'Are you also
one of his disciples?'
Peter said, 'I am not.'
The servants and temple guards
had made a charcoal fire
in the courtyard,
and they were standing around it
to keep warm.
Peter went
and stood with them.
Inside, they were questioning Jesus
about his disciples
and his teaching.
Jesus said, 'I have always spoken openly.
I have taught
in the synagogue,
and in the temple,
where people gather.
I have said nothing in secret.
Why ask me,
when you can ask
those who heard me?'
One of the temple guards
struck Jesus on the face,
saying, 'That is not
how you answer
the high priest.'
Jesus said, 'If what I have said
is untrue, then say so;
but if it is true, why strike me?'
Annas now sent Jesus, bound,
to Caiaphas the high priest.
Simon Peter
was still standing
with the temple guards,
by the charcoal fire,
in the courtyard.
Those who were standing there
asked Peter, 'Are you also
one of his disciples?'
Peter again denied it,
saying, 'I am not.'
One of the servants of the high priest
(a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off)
said to Peter, 'Did I not
see you with him, in the garden?'
Again Peter denied it;
and at that very moment,
the cock crowed.

FRIDAY 29 MARCH

Good Friday Passion Reading Part 2

John 18:28 - 19:16

At first light, they took Jesus
from the court of
Caiaphas, the high priest,
to the headquarters of
Pilate, the Roman governor.
But they did not go in,
as that would have been
a ritual defilement, preventing them
from eating the Passover.
So Pilate went out to them,
and asked, 'What charges do you bring
against this man?'
They answered, 'If he were not
an offender, we would not have
brought him to you.'
Pilate said, 'Take him yourselves,
and judge him by your own law.'
They replied, 'It is not lawful for us
to put anyone to death.'
Pilate went back inside his headquarters.
There, he summoned Jesus,
and asked him, 'Are you
the king of the Jews?'
Jesus said, 'Do you ask this for yourself,
or as something that others have said?'
Pilate replied, 'I am a Roman, not a Jew.
Your own people
and their chief priests
have handed you over to me.
What have you done?'
Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not
of this world,
or I would have guards,
fighting to protect me.
My kingdom is not here.'
Pilate said, 'So you are a king!'
Jesus said, 'Those are your words.
I was born, and I came into the world,
to bear witness to the truth.
Everyone who seeks the truth
hears my voice.'
Pilate said, 'And what is truth?'
Pilate then returned
to those who were waiting outside,
and said, 'I find no case against him.
But you have a custom
that I release a prisoner for you
at Passover.
Do you want me to release to you
the king of the Jews?'
And they shouted, 'Not him,
but Barabbas!'
And Barabbas
was a common criminal.

Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.
The soldiers made a crown, out of thorns,
and put it on his head;
and they dressed him
in a purple robe.
They came up to him, saying,
'Hail, King of the Jews!'
and struck him on the face.
Pilate returned to those who were waiting outside,
and said, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you
to let you know
that I find no case against him.'
Jesus came out,
wearing the crown of thorns
and the purple robe.
Pilate said, 'Behold the man!'
As soon as the chief priests, and the temple guards,
saw him,
they shouted, 'Crucify!'
Pilate said, 'Take him yourselves and crucify him.
I find no case against him.'
They said, 'By our law, he must die,
for he claims to be
the Son of God.'
When Pilate heard this,
he was greatly concerned.
He entered his headquarters again,
and asked Jesus, 'Where are you from?'
But Jesus gave no answer.
Pilate said, 'Do you refuse to speak to me?
Do you not see
that I have the power to release you,
or to crucify you?'
Jesus said, 'You would have had
no power over me,
had it not been given to you.
The one who handed me over to you
is guilty of a greater sin.'
On hearing this, Pilate again
sought to release Jesus,
but the chief priests
and the temple guards
said, 'If you release him, you are no friend
of the emperor,
for he sets himself against the emperor,
by calling himself a king.'
Pilate took Jesus outside,
and sat on the judgement seat,
at the stone pavement.
It was about midday
on the day of preparation
for the Passover.
Pilate said, 'Here is your king!'
They cried out, 'Away with him!
Crucify him!'
Pilate asked them, 'Shall I
crucify your king?'
They answered, 'We have no king
but the emperor!'
And Pilate handed Jesus over to them,
and they led him away
to be crucified.

FRIDAY 29 MARCH

Good Friday Passion Reading Part 3

John 19:17-end

With Jesus carrying his own cross,
they led him out
to The Place of the Skull
(which in Hebrew is Golgotha).
There they crucified him,
between two others,
one on his right, and one on his left.
Pilate had an inscription
placed on the cross: 'Jesus of Nazareth,
the King of the Jews.'
Many people were able to read this,
as the place of the crucifixion
was near the city,
and the sign was written
in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew.
The chief priests complained to Pilate,
insisting that the inscription
should not be
'The King of the Jews',
but
'This man claimed to be
the King of the Jews'.
But Pilate said, 'What I have written,
I have written.'
The soldiers who crucified Jesus
divided his clothes
between them.
But his tunic was woven as a single piece,
so rather than tear it,
they cast lots for it.
As it says in the psalm, 'They divided my garments
amongst themselves,
and for my clothing,
they cast lots.'
Standing by the cross of Jesus
were his mother,
and his mother's sister,
Mary the wife of Clopas,
and Mary Magdalene.
When Jesus saw the beloved disciple
standing beside his mother,
Jesus said to his mother, 'Here is your son',
and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.'
And from that time on,
the disciple took her into his own home.
Knowing that everything was now completed,
and in order to fulfil the scripture,
Jesus said, 'I am thirsty.'
From a jar that was standing there,
they filled a sponge with sour wine,
fixed it
on a branch of hyssop,
and lifted it to his mouth.
When Jesus had received it,
he said, 'It is finished,'
And he bowed his head,
and gave up his spirit.

The temple authorities
did not want the crucifixions
continuing into the sabbath,
so they asked Pilate to order
that the legs of the crucified
be broken,
and the bodies removed.
The soldiers came
and broke the legs
of the two who had been crucified
alongside Jesus.
But when they came to Jesus,
seeing that he was already dead,
they did not break his legs,
but pierced his side with a spear;
and blood and water
flowed out.
This account is given
by one who
witnessed these things,
so that you may know it to be true.
And so the scriptures were fulfilled:
'Not one of his bones shall be broken,'
and, 'They will look upon
the one they have pierced.'
After all these things
had taken place,
Joseph of Arimathea
sought and received
from Pilate
permission to take away
the body of Jesus.
Joseph was a disciple of Jesus,
but secretly, for fear
of the religious authorities.
Nicodemus, who had first come to Jesus
by night,
brought linen cloths,
and ointment, with myrrh, and aloe.
and together
they anointed and wrapped
the body of Jesus
for burial.
In a garden,
close to the place of crucifixion,
there was a new tomb,
in which no one
had ever been laid.
And as the sabbath
was soon to begin,
and the tomb was nearby,
they laid Jesus there.

SUNDAY 31 MARCH

Easter Day

FIRST READING – *Isaiah 25.6-9*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

On this holy mountain, the Lord God
will prepare for all people
a feast of rich food
and fine wine.
The Lord will take away
the cloud of darkness
that hangs over peoples and nations.
The Lord God
will bring to an end
the humiliation of the people,
will wipe away
the tears from all faces,
and will destroy
the power of death
for ever.
And the people will say, 'This is the day
of the Lord our God.
Let us rejoice,
for we trusted in God,
and the day
of our salvation
has come.'
This is the word of the Lord.

SECOND READING – *1 Corinthians 15.1-10a*

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Let me remind you again,
my brothers and sisters,
of the good news
that you received, which is now
your firm foundation,
and in which you are saved:
that Christ died for our sins, and was buried;
and that he was raised on the third day -
and all this
in fulfilment of the scriptures.
After he was raised from the dead,
he appeared to Peter,
then to the twelve,
then to more than
five hundred brothers and sisters
at one time.
Then he appeared to James;
then to all the apostles.
And last of all,
he appeared also to me,
as to one
untimely born,
unfit to be called
even the least of the apostles,
because I persecuted
the church of God.
But by the grace of God,
I am what I am.
And God's grace towards me
has not been in vain.
This is the word of the Lord.

GOSPEL – *John 20.1-18*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to John.

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark,
Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, and saw
that the stone
had been removed.
She hurried back to Simon Peter,
and the disciple Jesus loved, and said,
'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb,
and we do not know
where they have laid him.'
Peter and the other disciple
set off running
towards the tomb.
The other disciple outran Peter,
reaching the tomb first.
Bending down to look in,
he could see the linen wrappings, lying there,
but did not go in.
Then Simon Peter came, following him,
and went into the tomb.
He saw the linen wrappings,
and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head
rolled up separately, in a place by itself.
Then the other disciple also went in,
and saw, and believed;
(for until this point,
they had not understood the scripture,
that he must rise from the dead).
When these two disciples returned to their homes,
Mary stayed, weeping, outside the tomb.
As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb;
and she saw two angels, in white robes,
sitting one at the head, and one at the feet,
of where the body of Jesus had been.
The angels said to Mary, 'Why are you weeping?'
Mary said, 'They have taken away my Lord,
and I do not know where they have laid him.'
When she had said this, she turned around,
and saw Jesus standing there,
but she did not know
that it was Jesus.
Jesus asked her, 'Why are you weeping? Who is it
that you are looking for?'
Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him,
'Sir, if you have carried him away,
tell me where you have laid him,
and I will take him away.'
Jesus said to her, 'Mary!'
Mary turned, and said to him, 'Teacher!'
Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me,
for I have not yet ascended to the Father.
But go, and tell my brothers
that I am ascending
to my Father and your Father,
to my God and your God.
Mary Magdalene went
and said to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord';
and she told them the words
the Lord had spoken to her.
This is the Gospel of the Lord.