

■ 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
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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 spoken earlier
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, who was 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 temple guards and servants
had made a charcoal fire
in the courtyard,
and they were standing around it
to keep warm.
Peter went
and stood with them.
Inside, Jesus was being questioned
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.
You do not need
to question me.
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.

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 is it 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 is it
that you have 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, 'You have said it.
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, '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.

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 herbs,
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 was there, who
witnessed these things,
so that you may know it
to be true.
And so it is
that the scriptures
were fulfilled:
'Not one
of his bones
will 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 fragrant oils.
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 the body of Jesus there.