

Palm Sunday (Year B)

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 50.4-9a*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord God has taught me wisdom, so that I may speak words of comfort to the weary.

Morning by morning, the Lord God awakens me, so 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.

Let my accusers confront me.

I will set my face like flint.

For I know that the Lord God brings justice, and I will not be defeated or ashamed.

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 condemned 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 Passover 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 who is here,
eating with me.'

The disciples were distressed,
and began to say to him,
one after another, 'Surely, not me, Lord.'

Jesus said to them, 'It is one of the twelve,
one who is eating,
here 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.

And Jesus said to them, 'You will all fall away;
as the scripture says, "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, 'Others may fall away,
but 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
have to enter
the time of temptation, testing, and trial;
for the spirit 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 there.

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 Jesus, '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 at 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 at him,

blindfolded him,

beat him,

and said to him,

'What now,

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 they were honouring 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.

A man called Simon, from north Africa,
the father of Alexander and Rufus, was there,
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 they crucified him.

And they divided his clothing between them,
casting lots
to determine
what each of them
would 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 sanctuary
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 provided for 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.