

## SUNDAY 2 APRIL

*Palm Sunday*

### **PALM PROCESSION** – *Matthew 21.4-11*

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

The disciples brought the donkey and the foal to Jesus,  
as Jesus had instructed them,  
and made a saddle from their cloaks,  
fulfilling the words  
of the prophet Zechariah,  
'Your king is coming to you, Jerusalem,  
humble, and riding on a donkey,  
on the foal of a donkey.'

Many in the crowd  
spread their cloaks on the road,  
and others cut branches from the trees  
and spread those on the road.

The crowds that went in front of him,  
and the crowds that followed behind him,  
shouted out, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessed is the one who comes  
in the name of the Lord!'

When they entered Jerusalem,  
the whole city was in turmoil,  
with everyone asking, 'Who is this?'

And the crowds were saying, 'This is  
the prophet Jesus,  
from Nazareth, in Galilee.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

### **MAIN LITURGY**

#### **FIRST READING** – *Isaiah 50.4-7*

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord God has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,  
that I may know how to sustain the weary  
with a word.

Morning by morning  
the Lord God awakens my ear,  
that I may listen and learn.

The Lord God has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious;  
I did not turn away.

I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks  
to those who pulled out the beard.

I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.

The Lord God helps me;  
I have not been disgraced.

I have set my face like flint,  
and I know  
that I shall not  
be put to shame.

This is the word of the Lord.

#### **SECOND READING** – *Philippians 2.5-11*

A reading from the letter of Paul  
to the Philippians.

Christ Jesus  
did not regard  
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** – *Matthew 26.14 - 27.66*

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to Matthew.

Judas Iscariot,  
one of the twelve,  
went to the chief priests, and said,  
'What will you give me  
if I betray him to you?'

They paid him  
thirty pieces of silver.

And from that moment,  
he looked for an opportunity  
to betray Jesus to them.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread,  
the disciples came to Jesus, saying,  
'Where shall we make the preparations  
for you  
to eat the Passover?'

Jesus said, 'Go into the city  
to a certain man,  
and say to him,  
"The Teacher says, My time is near;  
I will keep the Passover at your house  
with my disciples."'

The disciples did  
as Jesus had directed them,  
and they prepared  
the Passover meal.

When it was evening,  
Jesus took his place at the table  
with the twelve;  
and while they were eating, he said to them,  
'Truly, I tell you:  
one of you will betray me.'  
They were greatly distressed,  
and each began to say to Jesus,  
'Lord, is it I?'  
Jesus said, 'One of you  
who has shared this meal with me  
will betray me.  
The Son of Man will go  
as it is written.  
As for the one who betrays him,  
it would have been better  
not to have been born.'  
Judas, the betrayer, said,  
'Teacher, is it I?'  
Jesus replied,  
'You have said it.'

While they were eating,  
Jesus took bread,  
blessed it, broke it,  
and gave it to the disciples, saying,  
'Take, eat; this is my body.'  
Then he took a cup,  
gave thanks,  
and gave it to them,  
saying, 'Drink from this cup, all of you;  
for this is my blood  
of the covenant,  
which is poured out for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
I tell you,  
I will not drink again  
of the fruit  
of the vine  
until the day  
when I drink it with you anew,  
in my Father's kingdom.'

When they had sung a hymn,  
they went out  
to the Mount of Olives.  
Then Jesus said to them,  
'You will all fall away  
because of me  
this night.  
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,  
'Truly I tell you,  
this very night,  
before the cock crows,  
you will deny me three times.'  
Peter said,  
'Even if I must die with you,  
I will not deny you!'  
And all the disciples  
said the same.

Jesus went, with his disciples,  
to the place called Gethsemane,  
and said to them, 'Sit here,  
while I go over there to pray.'  
He took with him  
Peter, and the brothers James and John,  
and began to be greatly distressed.  
He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieving,  
even to death. Remain here,  
and stay awake with me.'  
And going a little further,  
he fell to the ground,  
and prayed, 'My Father,  
if it is possible,  
take this cup from me;  
yet not my will, but yours, be done.'  
Returning to the disciples,  
he found them sleeping.  
He said to Peter, 'Could you not  
watch with me, even 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.'  
Again he went away, and prayed, 'My Father,  
if this cannot pass  
unless I drink it,  
your will be done.'  
And he returned, and again  
found them sleeping,  
for their eyes were heavy.  
So leaving them again,  
he went away,  
and prayed a the third time,  
saying the same words.  
Then he returned to the disciples,  
and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping,  
and taking your rest?  
The hour has come,  
and the Son of Man is betrayed  
into the hands of sinners.  
Let us be going;  
my betrayer is at hand.'

While Jesus was still speaking,  
Judas, one of the twelve, arrived.  
With him was a large crowd,  
with swords and clubs,  
from the chief priests,  
and the elders of the people.  
Judas had given them a sign,  
saying, 'The one I will kiss  
is the man;  
arrest him.'  
Judas approached Jesus,  
saying, 'Greetings, Rabbi,'  
and kissed him.  
Jesus said to Judas, 'My friend, do  
what you are here to do.'  
Then they took hold of Jesus,  
and arrested him.  
One of the disciples  
drew his sword,  
and struck  
the servant of the high priest,  
cutting off his ear.  
But Jesus said, 'Put away your sword;  
for all who live  
by the sword  
will die  
by the sword.  
I could appeal to my Father,  
and he would send  
twelve legions  
of angels.  
But the scriptures must be fulfilled,  
that it must happen  
in this way.'  
Then Jesus turned  
to the gathered crowd,  
and said, 'Day after day  
I was teaching in the temple,  
and you did not arrest me.  
And now you come out  
with swords and clubs  
to arrest me  
like an outlaw.  
But all this has taken place  
that the scriptures  
might be fulfilled.'  
Then all the disciples  
deserted him, and fled.

Those who had arrested Jesus  
took him to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest,  
where the scribes and the elders had gathered.  
Peter followed them at a distance,  
to the courtyard of the high priest,  
where he sat with the guards,  
to see how this would end.  
The chief priests, and the whole council,  
were looking for false testimony against Jesus,  
so that they might  
put him to death.  
But they found none,  
even though  
many false witnesses came forward.  
Finally, two came forward, who claimed  
that Jesus had said  
he could destroy  
the temple of God,  
and rebuild it,  
in three days.  
The high priest stood up,  
and demanded of Jesus, 'How do you respond  
to this testimony?  
Have you no answer?'  
Jesus remained silent.  
Then the high priest said,  
'I put you under oath  
before the living God.  
Tell us now,  
whether you are the Messiah,  
the Son of God.'  
Jesus said to him, 'You have said it.  
But I say to you,  
that after all this,  
you will see the Son of Man  
seated  
at the right hand of power,  
and returning  
on the clouds of heaven.'  
Then the high priest  
tore his robes,  
and said to the scribes,  
and the elders, 'We need  
no more witnesses.  
You have heard  
his blasphemy.  
What is your verdict?'  
The scribes and the elders  
answered, 'He must die.'  
And they spat  
in his face,  
and struck him.  
And some mocked him, saying,  
'If you are a prophet,  
tell us who struck you.'

Peter was sitting outside,  
in the courtyard.  
A servant-girl  
approached Peter,  
and said, 'You were with Jesus, the Galilean.'  
Peter denied it,  
saying, 'I do not know  
what you are talking about,'  
and went out  
to the gate-house.  
Another servant-girl saw him there, and said,  
'This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.'  
Again Peter denied it, this time with an oath,  
saying, 'I do not know the man.'  
After a while, those standing there  
said to Peter, 'Surely you are with him,  
for your accent betrays you.'  
Peter began to curse, and again swore,  
with an oath, 'I do not know the man!'  
At that very moment,  
the cock crowed.  
And Peter remembered  
what Jesus had said:  
'Before the cock crows,  
you will deny me three times.'  
And Peter went out,  
and wept bitterly.

When morning came,  
the chief priests,  
and the elders of the people,  
again conspired together, against Jesus,  
to bring about his death.  
They bound Jesus, led him away,  
and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

When Judas saw  
that Jesus was condemned,  
he repented,  
and brought back  
the thirty silver coins  
to the chief priests and the elders.  
Judas said, 'I have sinned,  
by betraying innocent blood.'  
The chief priests, and the elders, said,  
'What is that to us? See to it yourself.'  
Judas threw the coins  
into the temple.  
And he went away  
and hanged himself.

The chief priests,  
taking the coins,  
said, 'We cannot put these  
into the treasury,  
as they are blood money.'  
And after discussing this together,  
they used them  
to buy the potter's field,  
as a place to bury foreigners;  
and it is for this reason  
that the field has been called  
The Field of Blood  
to this day.  
And so the words of the prophet  
were fulfilled: 'They took thirty silver coins,  
the price that had been set on him,  
and gave them for the potter's field,  
as the Lord directed.'

Jesus stood before Pilate, the governor;  
and Pilate asked Jesus,  
'Are you the King of the Jews?'  
Jesus replied, 'You have said it.'  
The chief priests and the elders  
set out their accusations  
against Jesus;  
but Jesus gave no reply.  
Pilate said to Jesus, 'Do you not hear  
the accusations  
they are making against you?'  
And still, Jesus gave no reply.

And a message was sent to Pilate  
by his wife:  
'Have nothing to do with this innocent man,  
for today I have suffered many things  
in a dream, because of him.'

Now at the festival, it was the custom  
of the governor  
to release to the crowd  
a prisoner, of their choosing.  
Pilate was holding a notorious prisoner,  
called Barabbas.  
Pilate asked the gathered crowd,  
'Who do you want me to release for you?  
Barabbas?  
Or Jesus, called the Messiah?'  
Pilate recognised  
that it was out of envy  
that the chief priests and the elders  
had arrested Jesus,  
and had brought Jesus to him.  
And now the chief priests and elders  
persuaded the crowds  
to ask for the release of Barabbas,  
and to have Jesus  
put to death.  
Pilate asked the crowd again, 'Which of these two  
shall I release to you?'  
And the crowd demanded Barabbas.  
Pilate asked them, 'What then shall I do  
with Jesus, called the Christ?'  
And they cried out, 'Crucify him!'  
Pilate asked, 'What evil has he done?'  
But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify!'

When Pilate saw that he could do nothing,  
and that a riot was beginning,  
he took water,  
and washed his hands before the crowd,  
saying, 'I am innocent  
of this man's blood.'  
The people answered, 'His blood be on us  
and on our children!'  
Pilate released Barabbas for them,  
and had Jesus flogged;  
then handed Jesus over  
to be crucified.

Pilate's soldiers  
took Jesus to their barracks, where  
the whole company of soldiers  
gathered around him.  
They stripped him,  
and put a scarlet robe on him,  
then twisted some thorns into a crown,  
and put it on his head.  
They put a reed in his right hand,  
then knelt before him, and mocked him,  
saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'  
They spat on him,  
and took the reed,  
and struck him on the head.  
Having mocked him,  
they stripped him of the robe,  
put his own clothes on him,  
and led him away to crucify him.

As they went out,  
a man from north Africa, named Simon, was there,  
and they made him carry the cross.  
When they came to the place called Golgotha  
(which means the Place of the Skull),  
they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall;  
but when he tasted it,  
he would not drink it.  
And when they had crucified him,  
they divided his clothes amongst themselves  
by casting lots.  
Then they sat and kept watch over him.  
Above his head,  
they put the charge against him,  
which read, 'This is Jesus,  
the King of the Jews.'  
Two thieves  
were crucified with him,  
one on his right, and one on his left.  
Those who passed by  
mocked him, saying,  
'You who would destroy the temple  
and build it in three days,  
save yourself.  
If you are the Son of God,  
come down from the cross.'  
The chief priests, the elders,  
and the teachers of the law,  
also mocked him, saying,  
'He saved others, but he cannot save himself.  
If he is the King of Israel,  
let him come down from the cross,  
and we will believe in him.  
He trusts in God;  
he claims to be the Son of God;  
let us see  
whether God  
will deliver him now.'  
And those who were crucified with him  
also taunted him.

At midday,  
darkness came over the whole land  
for three hours.  
Then Jesus cried 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.  
But the others said, 'Wait,  
let us see whether Elijah  
will come to save him.'  
Then Jesus  
let out a loud cry  
once again,  
and breathed his last.  
At that very moment,  
the curtain of the temple  
was torn in two.  
The earth shook,  
and rocks split apart.  
Tombs broke open,  
and the bodies of many godly people who had died  
were awakened.  
After his resurrection,  
they came out from their tombs,  
and entered the holy city,  
and appeared to many.  
Now when the centurion guarding Jesus,  
and the other soldiers with him,  
saw the earthquake,  
and all that had taken place,  
they said, 'Truly this was  
the Son of God.'  
Many women were also there,  
looking on from a distance.  
They had followed Jesus from Galilee,  
and had provided for him.  
Amongst them were Mary Magdalene,  
Mary the mother of James and Joseph,  
and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening,  
Joseph of Arimathea,  
a disciple of Jesus,  
went to Pilate,  
and asked for the body of Jesus;  
and Pilate ordered  
that it should be given to him.  
So Joseph of Arimathea  
took the body of Jesus,  
wrapped it  
in a clean linen cloth,  
and laid it  
in his own new tomb,  
which had been carved out  
from the rock.  
He rolled a great stone  
across the door of the tomb,  
and went away.  
Mary Magdalene,  
and the other Mary,  
were there,  
sitting opposite the tomb.

The next day,  
the chief priests and the Pharisees  
went to Pilate, and said,  
'Sir, while that impostor was still alive,  
he said that after three days  
he would rise again;  
so order that the tomb  
be made secure  
until the third day;  
or his disciples may come  
and remove the body,  
and tell the people  
he has risen  
from the dead,  
and this last deception  
would be worse  
than the first.'  
Pilate said,  
'You have soldiers;  
go, make it secure.'  
So they went with soldiers  
and made the tomb secure.

The Passion of the Lord.