



ONE MISSION, TWO PARISHES



Passion Sunday – year B Sunday 24 March 2024

Administrator

Fr Dean Mathieson

Part-time Parish Secretary

Sonya O'Farrell

Wednesdays,

Thursdays & Fridays

10am – 2pm

SUNDAY MASS

Saturday Vigil

ST: & SL: 6pm

Sunday

St Luke's 8:30am

St Timothy's 10:30am

St Timothy's 5pm (Vietnamese)

WEEKDAY MASSES

St Timothy's:

Wed & Thurs - 9:15am

Fri - 10am

1st Wed of the month

@ 10.00am Mass of Anointing

St Luke's:

Tues - 5pm

Wed, Thurs, Fri - 9:30am

Sat - 9am

Rosary after each morning Mass

RECONCILIATION

SL: Sat 9.30am-10am

5.30pm – 5.50pm

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

SL: Wed 7pm-8pm

Darkness at Noon: Scott Hahn Reflects on Passion Sunday

Crowned with thorns, our Lord is lifted up on the Cross, where He dies as “King of the Jews.” Notice how many times He is called “king” in today’s Gospel—mostly in scorn and mockery.

As we hear the long accounts of His Passion, at every turn we must remind ourselves—He suffered this cruel and unusual violence for us.

He is the Suffering Servant foretold by Isaiah in today’s First Reading. He reenacts the agony described in today’s Psalm, and even dies with the first words of that Psalm on His lips (see Psalm 22:1).

Listen carefully for the echoes of this Psalm throughout today’s Gospel—as Jesus is beaten, His hands and feet are pierced; as His enemies gamble for His clothes, wagging their heads, mocking His faith in God’s love, His faith that God will deliver Him.

Are we that much different from our Lord’s tormenters? Often, don’t we deny that He is King, refusing to obey His only commands that we love Him and one another? Don’t we render Him mock tribute, pay Him lip service with our half-hearted devotions?

In the dark noon of Calvary, the veil in Jerusalem’s temple was torn. It was a sign that by His death Jesus destroyed forever the barrier separating us from the presence of God.

He was God and yet humbled Himself to come among us, we’re reminded in today’s Epistle. And despite our repeated failures, our frailty, Jesus still humbles Himself to come to us, offering us His body and blood in the Eucharist.

His enemies never understood: His kingship isn’t of this world (see John 18:36). He wants to write His law, His rule of life on our hearts and minds.

As we enter Holy Week, let us once more resolve to give Him dominion in our lives. Let us take up the cross He gives to us—and confess with all our hearts, minds, and strength that truly this is the Son of God.

Scott Hahn

Prayer to Saint Timothy

O God, who adorned Saint Timothy with apostolic virtues, grant, through his intercession that, living justly and devoutly in this present age, we may merit to reach our heavenly homeland. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Patron Saint of stomach and intestinal disorders.

Prayer to Saint Luke the Evangelist

O St. Luke, you were chosen to reveal in preaching and writing God's love for the poor. Moved by the heavenly Spirit of Love, you detailed the life of Jesus, showing His divinity and His genuine compassion for all human beings. Help those who already glory in God's name to persevere in one heart and one mind and inspire all people that they may hear the Good News of Salvation. Amen

Patron Saint of artists, physicians, surgeons, students and butchers.

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

Holy Thursday – 28th March

Mass of the Lord's Supper

St Luke's & St Timothy's - 7pm

Easter Vigil – Sat 30th March

St Luke's - 7:30pm

St Timothy's - 7:30pm

Good Friday – 29th March

Station of the Cross

St Luke's - 10:30am, St Timothy's - 2:15pm

Commemoration of the Lord's Passion

St Luke's & St Timothy's - 3pm

Easter Sunday – 31st March

St Luke's - 8:30am

St Timothy's - 10:30am

St Timothy's - 5pm

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

Saturday 6pm SL
6pm ST
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

23 and 24 March

O. Hammill, D. Dixon & J. D Souza
H. Lobo, P. Kelly & M. Deayton
Melina Barcellona & Peter McKeown
S. Chin, G. Hemsley & J. Roussety
Thuy Vu & Hieu Nguyen

30 and 31 March

7.30pm See separate Easter roster
7.30pm See separate Easter roster
May McKeown
Alfred Lee & Andrew Johny
Mai Le & Youth

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

Saturday 6pm SL
6pm ST
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

Godfrey Thong
Owen Grealy
Tony Fernandes
Daphne Hickman
Hoang Nguyen

7.30pm Margaret Gearon
7.30pm Owen Grealy
Ian Holmes
Laura Cigana
Youth Group

SLIDE OPERATORS

Saturday 6pm SL
6pm ST
Sunday 8:30am SL
10:30am ST
5pm ST

Nigel Tauro
Michelle Chen
Paul Tierney
Lee Min Yee
Toan Tran

7.30pm Choir
7.30pm Michelle Chen
Rosemary Donaldson
Manny Gonzalez
Toan Tran

SL WELCOMERS 23/24 MAR

6:00pm John Ryan
8:30am Margaret Gearon
ST 10.30am Volunteer

SL CHURCH CLEANING

6th April – Maree's Team
Maree Moss, Allen Leung,
Serena Ng & Lynda Kilroe-Smith

SL CHURCH FLOWERS

30th March - Joan McHugh
6th April - Kate Skowronska
ST CHURCH FLOWERS

SL WELCOMERS 30/31 MAR

7:30pm Libby Theodore
8:30am Joe Brogno
ST 10.30am Volunteer

ST CHURCH CLEANING

6th April @ 8am
Toan Tran, Dao Dinh,
Hieu Nguyen & Dieu Nguyen.

ST CHURCH FLOWERS

Parishioners

ST COUNTERS

This week Team 7:
Barry & Christine Silvester
Next week Team 8:
Fela Colasanti & Chin L Tay

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER this weekend all who are sick, especially Bernadine O'Meara, Maura, Kit Bing Fan, Tony Keane, Kathryn Holmes, Therese O'Donoghue, Stewart Davis, Mark, Jerry Donoghue, Margaret Hayes, Kevin Bolton, the Italiano family and all those Parishioners unable to be among us this weekend. For all who have died especially Allan McDonald who died recently, for the casualties of war in Ukraine, Israel and Gaza and for those whose anniversaries occur about this time especially Harold Lapsley, Clem Dunn, Olanda Mead, Joseph Boo Chiang Wee, Margaret Lancashire, Kevin Slavin, John Arelette, Roy Agosta, Colin Dughard, George Arulanandam, Jimmy Ong, Jenene Lancashire, Santa Taranto, Donald Andriesz & Ellen Kelly. May they rest in peace.

STEWARDSHIP ENVELOPES

The next series of Stewardship envelopes are in the church foyers of both churches this weekend.

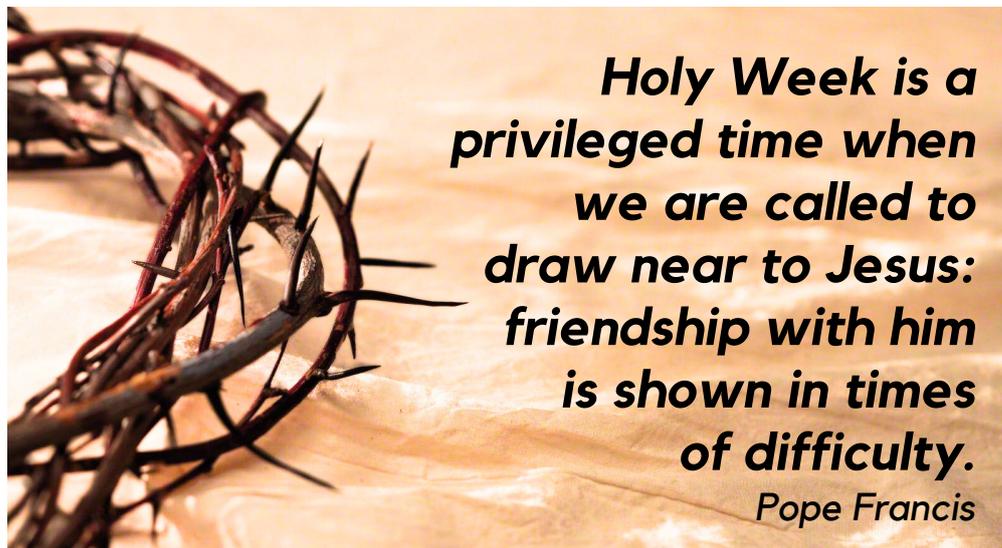
Thanks to all parishioners for your continued financial support.

Resources

MELBOURNE CATHOLIC: [Patrick Oration 2024 speaks into 'a world that yearns for more'](#)

MAJELLAN FAMILY MEDIA: [Embracing eternal joy](#)

THE JOURNEY THIS WEEK: On The Journey This Week: Sr Katherine Stone MGL highlights the two Gospel readings for Palm Sunday. Mother Hilda says when Jesus died, he surrendered himself to you, and no matter what you think of yourself, that is irreversible. Plus, Fr Tony Percy, and more reflections for the coming Holy Week. The Journey podcast available at www.jcr.org.au.



STEWARDSHIP CORNER:

The First collection is for the priest and retired priests

The Second collection is for parish expenses

ST: Weekly First Collection Presbytery Envelopes: \$204

Thanksgiving Stewardship Envelopes this week: \$185

Vietnamese Donation: \$265.15

SL: Last week's Church Stewardship Envelopes: \$419

Last week's Presbytery Stewardship Envelopes: \$298

Parish Groups & Contacts

Volunteers and Rosters

ST: Corrie Quimbo 9412 8499

SL: Margaret Gearon 0409 807 135

Baptism Preparation

ST: Mary Italiano 9412 8499

Vietnamese Community

Hoang Nguyen 0422 400 116

Andy Tran 0422 382 109

Vietnamese Youth

Theresa Nguyen 0415 158 749

Parish Collection Preparers

ST: Barry Silvester &

Michael Kawalewski

Stewardship Counters

SL: Dale Dixon - 0433 885 087

Steve Kilroe-Smith - 0404 864 232

Parishes Safeguarding Committee

Theresa Nguyen, Mary Italiano,

Darren McLean - 0417 774 504

Janette Clark - 9877 2292

Parish history

SL: Margaret Gearon - 0409 807 135

Parish Accountant

Bernard Negline

SL: Hall Hire

Sonya O'Farrell @ the

Parish Office - 9877 2292

Church Sacristan

ST: Margaret King & Hoang Nguyen

SL: Greg Grant - 0401 644 474

Church Housekeeping

ST: Margaret King 9412 8499

Church Cleaning & Flowers

SL: Megan McLean - 0419 347 693

Church Linen

SL: Beryl Kanagalinggam

Parish Garden Maintenance

ST: Des Connors, Leo Watson,

Anico Yee & Vietnamese Community

SL: Darren McLean - 0417 774 504

Parish Choirs

ST: Mary Italiano & Theresa Nguyen

SL: Lina & Maria Mafi

0411 136 043

St Vincent de Paul Conference

For Assistance: 1800 305 330

(Monday to Friday 10am-3pm)

Parish Contacts:

ST: John McCoy

SL: Tony Lobo &

Steve Kilroe-Smith

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!

Response to the Psalm: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Gospel Acclamation: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory! Christ became obedient for us even to death dying on the cross. Therefore God raised him on high and gave him a name above all other names. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Eucharistic Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

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

The Easter Triduum: Entering into the Paschal Mystery

EASTER VIGIL

The celebration of the Easter Vigil tells the whole story of our salvation — from creation to resurrection and beyond. The Easter Vigil includes the lighting of the Easter Fire and Paschal Candle (the large candle that we will use throughout the year), the singing of the Exsultet (the Easter Proclamation), the expanded Liturgy of the Word that traces time through Salvation History (the story of our Salvation), the Liturgy of Initiation (where new people come into the Church), and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. All these rituals come together for one purpose: to remember and recall the saving deeds of our God on our behalf. Here's an explanation of two moments from the celebration.

The Singing of the Exsultet

The Exsultet, or the Easter Proclamation, is a hymn that is sung by a deacon, priest, or cantor. This hymn speaks of how God has interceded in our lives on our behalf. The Exsultet especially recalls the Holy Night when Jesus Christ rose from the dead. What makes this moment particularly dramatic is that the Exsultet is sung in a church lit only with the light of the Paschal Candle and other smaller candles, which people are holding. In order to pray this hymn along with the deacon, priest, or cantor, try reflecting on the words of the hymn throughout Holy Saturday.

The Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word for the Easter Vigil is comprised of nine readings and seven responsorial psalms. The first reading begins with the story of Creation and then, each subsequent reading recounts the story of our faith lives through history. You'll hear the story of Issac and Abraham, the story of Moses and the Exodus, and more. All of these readings lead up to the singing of the Gloria when all the lights come on in the church, and then the final reading, the Resurrection of Christ, is proclaimed. Why so many readings? Again, like the singing of the Exsultet, the readings recount the many ways in which God has interceded on our behalf throughout history.

Most churches do not do the entire set of nine readings (for time's sake). But keep in mind that the point is to recall how God has interceded on humanity's behalf from the very beginning of time and that through this Easter Vigil we celebrate that God is present and always working in our lives, even still today.

Hosanna! Hosanna!

Passion Sunday, Year B

Draw or write what happened on each of these special days during Holy Week.



Passion Sunday



Holy Thursday

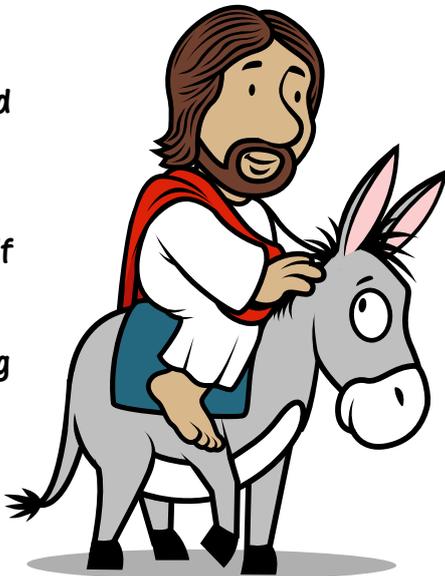


Good Friday



Easter Sunday

A crowd of people came to see Jesus as he entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. Draw yourself amongst a crowd of people waving palm fronds at Jesus.



SUNDAY READINGS

READ AT HOME

Palm Sunday
Year B
24 March 2024



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.

Readings and Commentaries

The procession with palms in commemoration of the Lord's entry into Jerusalem (along with other features of our paschal liturgies) can be traced back at least as far as 4th century Jerusalem. Pilgrims flocked to the holy city after the peace of Constantine. One of them was a devout lady, perhaps a Spanish nun, named Egeria. Keen to share her experiences with her circle of friends, she kept a diary of her stay in Jerusalem around 384-385. It contains invaluable descriptions of the liturgies in which she took part.

On Palm Sunday afternoon, she reports, the faithful gathered with palms on the Mount of Olives and processed down to the city to the place of Jesus' resurrection (now the Church of the Holy Sepulchre), chanting on their way. Over 1700 years later, a procession with palms and chants still takes place on this day in churches around the world.

All four gospels contain a great deal of material for the period between Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and his betrayal. They testify to the growing tension that eventually reaches crisis point. This in-between time is ignored by the liturgy, making today's transition from "Hosanna" to "Crucify him" shockingly abrupt. It's reminiscent of what happened in the synagogue in Nazareth where Jesus "won the approval" of his townsfolk only to have them swiftly become enraged and murderous (Lk 4:22-30). In each case, the time frame has been condensed but the trajectory of Jesus' reception remains truthfully reflected.

A reading from the prophet Isaiah**50:4–7**

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.

First Reading

The book of the prophet Isaiah is the longest of the prophetic books and the most frequently used in the lectionary. The breadth and diversity of its material allows particularly pertinent passages to be chosen for liturgical seasons such as Advent and Lent. This is especially the case in Holy Week. Each day features a reading from one of the four oracles known collectively as the Servant Songs. They are scattered through chapters addressed to the exiles in Babylon.

The servant is a mysterious figure who could be the prophet himself, Moses, another salvific individual, or the people of Israel personified. Parallels with the suffering undergone by Jesus have led to the songs being given a Christian interpretation. Like Jesus, the servant is singled out by God for a mission that provokes hostility and involves suffering but advances the cause of salvation. The last and longest of the songs is proclaimed in full on Good Friday because the servant's ordeal is described in terms that are matched in the various passion narratives. Today's reading, from the third of the songs, has been chosen for the same reason. It reports the servant's personal experience. He identifies himself as a disciple who declares what he has heard from the Lord, suffers physical abuse in return, but refuses to resist. "I set my face like flint," he says, in words that echo how Jesus "set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Lk 9:51).

This reading signals a marked change of mood after the upbeat celebration of Jesus' palm-strewn entry into Jerusalem. Readers should deliver this oracle with a deliberate degree of pathos.

Responsorial Psalm**Ps 21:8–9, 17–20, 23–24**

R. My God, my God, why have you abandoned 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.**

Responsorial Psalm

Just as the Servant Songs foreshadow the passion narratives, so too do some of the psalms, most especially Psalm 21/22. This is the prayer whose unforgettable opening words – "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" – are cried out from the cross by Jesus. As the response for today's responsorial psalm, they plunge the assembly directly into the depths of his suffering.

However, there is more to the psalm than a cry of dereliction. Lament and pleading dominate the first half but their sombre tones are gradually lightened by renewed trust and praise as the psalm unfolds. This evolution is reflected in the responsorial psalm. The first three verses are full of anguish, while the fourth is a confident call to praise.

The passion narratives draw explicitly on this psalm. Mocking crowds, holes torn in hands and feet, clothing divided up by lot – all are familiar elements of the scene on Calvary. Jesus' last words in Luke's account – "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" – reflect the latter part of the psalm.

Like the first reading the psalm needs to be proclaimed with respect for its serious content. While the last verse is quite different in tone, it is prepared for by the prayer at the end of the preceding verse, "make haste to help me!"

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

2:6-11

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 passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark 14:1 - 15:47

(N. Narrator, J. Jesus, O. Other single speaker,
C. Crowd or more than one other speaker.)

N It was two days before the Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread, and the chief priests and scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by some trick and have him put to death. For they said,

C It must not be during the festivities, or there will be a disturbance among the people.

N Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper; he was at dinner when a woman came in with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the ointment on his head. Some who were there said to one another indignantly,

C Why this waste of ointment? Ointment like this could have been sold for over three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor;

N and they were angry with her. But Jesus said,

J Leave her alone. Why are you upsetting her? What she has done for me is one of the good works. You have the poor with you always and you can be kind to them whenever you wish, but you will not always have me. She has done what was in her power to do; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. I tell you solemnly, wherever throughout all the world the Good News is proclaimed, what she has done will be told also, in remembrance of her.

N Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, approached the chief priests with an offer to hand Jesus over to them. They were delighted to hear it, and promised to give him money; and he looked for a way of betraying him when the opportunity should occur.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was sacrificed, his disciples said to him,

C Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?

N So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them,

Second Reading

At the very outset of Jesus' public ministry, as we heard on the first Sunday of Lent, the devil tempts him to use his divine powers for his own interests. At the very end, while Jesus hung upon the cross, onlookers taunted him to save himself (Lk 23:35). From start to finish Jesus refuses to play god. These stories are crystallised in the early Christian hymn that is today's second reading. "Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself . . . and became as human beings are . . . even to death on a cross."

Coming on Palm Sunday, this reading serves as an overture to the Paschal Triduum, encapsulating all the themes of the paschal mystery that will be teased out over those holy days. It imagines Jesus' itinerary as an inverted parabola, starting on high from the divine realm, descending to the depth of the cross, and ascending again to glory. For Paul, as for the hymn, the cross is at the heart of the whole movement. It's the key to the mystery.

The reading as it stands gives no clue to the community issues that prompt Paul to cite this hymn. It is self-contained enough to stand on its own merits. Readers preparing to proclaim this confession of faith will quickly see what a work of literary art it is. The wealth of meaning condensed in its short lines calls for a delivery that is thoughtful and dignified but joyful. The NRSV renders it in inclusive language.

Gospel

Along with the commemoration of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, the distinguishing feature of today's liturgy is the solemn proclamation of the passion. As with the entrance rite, there are choices to be made. Should the longer or the shorter version be read? How should the gospel be proclaimed? With one voice or many? Should the assembly be one of those voices? Should the proclamation be interspersed with silence or music or chant? These decisions need to be made in the light of local pastoral circumstances. What will best enable the worshipping community to be fully engaged in the hearing of this essential story?

The three synoptic gospels are more in agreement about the events of Jesus' last hours than about the rest of his life, but each has its own particular emphases. Here are points made by scripture scholar Brendan Byrne in his introduction to Mark's passion narrative (*A Costly Freedom: A Theological Reading of Mark's Gospel*. Sydney: St Paul's, 2008, 213-216):

- It is the most stark and unrelieved of the four gospels.
- From the start the whole gospel has been driving towards the passion story.
- The tension between Jesus being Messiah and Son of God, yet destined to suffer and die, "finds some measure of resolution in the centurion's confession following Jesus' death on the cross" (15:39).

J Go into the city and you will meet a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him, and say to the owner of the house which he enters, 'The Master says: Where is my dining room in which I can eat the Passover with my disciples?' He will show you a large upper room furnished with couches, all prepared. Make the preparations for us there.

N The disciples set out and went to the city and found everything as he had told them, and prepared the Passover.

When evening came he arrived with the Twelve. And while they were at table eating, Jesus said,

J I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray me, one of you eating with me.

N They were distressed and asked him, one after another,

O Not I, surely?

N He said to them,

J It is one of the Twelve, one who is dipping into the same dish with me. Yes, the Son of Man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!

N And as they were eating he took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to them saying,

J Take it; this is my body.

N Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them, and all drank from it, and he said to them,

J This is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many. I tell you solemnly, I shall not drink any more wine until the day I drink the new wine in the kingdom of God.

N After the psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them,

J You will all lose faith, for the scripture says, 'I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.' However after my resurrection I shall go before you to Galilee.

N Peter said,

O Even if all lose faith, I will not.

N And Jesus said to him,

J I tell you solemnly, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will have disowned me three times.

N But he repeated still more earnestly,

O If I have to die with you, I will never disown you.

N And they all said the same.

They came to a small estate called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples,

J Stay here while I pray.

N Then he took Peter and James and John with him.

And a sudden fear came over him, and great distress.

And he said to them,

J My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here, and keep awake.

N And going on a little further he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this hour might pass him by. He said,

J Abba (Father)! Everything is possible for you. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it.

- "Jesus' conflict with the demonic comes to a climax as, in the utter loneliness of his death, he plumbs human alienation from God to its depth." His closest friends fail to give him comfort and companionship. "Most poignant of all . . . is the sense of silence 'from heaven' that will culminate in his cry of abandonment just before he dies on the cross" (15:34).
- But "there is a response 'from heaven' (the rending of the Temple curtain) that shows, as the centurion goes on to avow, that this 'truly was the Son of God' (15:39), and that in his dying the divine presence and power was striking the decisive blow in reclaiming humanity for the Kingdom".
- The gospel addresses the question as to how "Israel's Messiah, who was also God's beloved Son, was allowed to suffer and die" by showing that "it was God's express design that Israel's Messiah should accomplish his saving work through suffering and death" as the Scriptures had foreshadowed.
- To assist the preaching of the gospel in the Greco-Roman world, it shifts the blame for Jesus' death away from the Roman authorities and back towards the Jewish, with tragic historic consequences for the descendants of those who were Jesus' own people.

The attention given to the story of Jesus' suffering and death by all four evangelists confirms how central it was for the early Christian community and how vividly it was remembered. Its unique importance in grounding the community's faith in Jesus has been upheld ever since. Ministers of the word have both the responsibility and the opportunity to tell the story well. Familiar as it may be, it should be thoroughly rehearsed, even if it is read by a single voice, but especially if a number of voices are to be used. Every generation deserves to hear it proclaimed with faith, devotion, clarity and conviction. It is always their story.

The commentary for the gospel ends here.

On the next two pages, the remaining text of the gospel reading is presented across both columns.

N He came back and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter,
J Simon, are you asleep? Had you not the strength to keep awake for one hour? You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.
N Again he went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came back and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy; and they could find no answer for him. He came back a third time and said to them,
J You can sleep on now and take your rest. It is all over. The hour has come. Now the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is close at hand already.
N Even while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, came up with a number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. Now the traitor had arranged a signal with them. He had said,
O 'The one I kiss, he is the man. Take him in charge, and see he is well guarded when you lead him away.'
N So when the traitor came, he went straight up to Jesus and said,
O Rabbi!
N and kissed him. The others seized him and took him in charge. Then one of the bystanders drew his sword and struck out at the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus spoke,
J Am I a brigand that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I was among you teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid hands on me. But this is to fulfil the scriptures.
N And they all deserted him and ran away. A young man who followed him had nothing on but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, but he left the cloth in their hands and ran away naked.
They led Jesus off to the high priest; and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes assembled there. Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the high priest's palace, and was sitting with the attendants warming himself at the fire.
N The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus on which they might pass the death sentence. But they could not find any. Several, indeed, brought false evidence against him, but their evidence was conflicting. Some stood up and submitted this false evidence against him,
C We heard him say, 'I am going to destroy this Temple made by human hands, and in three days build another, not made by human hands.'
N But even on this point their evidence was conflicting. The high priest then stood up before the whole assembly and put this question to Jesus,
O Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?
N But he was silent and made no answer at all. The high priest put a second question to him,
O Are you the Christ the Son of the Blessed One?
N Jesus said,
J I am, and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.

N The high priest tore his robes, and said,
O What need of witnesses have we now? You heard the blasphemy. What is your finding?
N And they all gave their verdict: he deserved to die.
Some of them started spitting at him and, blindfolding him, began hitting him with their fists and shouting,
C Play the prophet!
N And the attendants rained blows on him. While Peter was down below in the courtyard, one of the high-priest's servant-girls came up. She saw Peter warming himself there, stared at him and said,
O You too were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.
N But he denied it, saying
O I do not know, I do not understand what you are talking about.
N And he went out into the forecourt. The servant-girl saw him and again started telling the bystanders,
O This fellow is one of them.
N But he again denied it. A little later the bystanders themselves said to Peter,
C You are one of them for sure! Why, you are a Galilean.
N But he started calling curses on himself and swearing,
O I do not know the man you speak of.
N At that moment the cock crew for the second time, and Peter recalled how Jesus had said to him, 'Before the cock crows twice, you will have disowned me three times.' And he burst into tears.
First thing in the morning, the chief priest together with the elders and scribes, in short the whole Sanhedrin, had their plan ready. They had Jesus bound and took him away and handed him over to Pilate.
Pilate questioned him,
O Are you the king of the Jews?
N He answered,
J It is you who say it.
N And the chief priests brought many accusations against him. Pilate questioned him again,
O Have you no reply at all? See how many accusations they are bringing against you!
N But to Pilate's amazement, Jesus made no further reply.
At festival time Pilate used to release a prisoner for them, anyone they asked for. Now a man called Barabbas was then in prison with the rioters who had committed murder during the uprising. When the crowds went up and began to ask Pilate the customary favour, Pilate answered them,
O Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews?
N For he realised it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over. The chief priests, however, had incited the crowd to demand that he should release Barabbas for them instead. Then Pilate spoke again.
O But in that case, what am I to do with the man you call king of the Jews?

N They shouted back.

C Crucify him!

N Pilate asked them,

O Why? What harm has he done?

N But they shouted all the louder,

C Crucify him!

N So Pilate, anxious to placate the crowd, released Barabbas for them and having ordered Jesus to be scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away to the inner part of the palace, that is, the Praetorium, and called the whole cohort together. They dressed him up in purple, twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on him. And they began saluting him,

C Hail, king of the Jews!

N They struck his head with a reed and spat on him; and they went down on their knees to do him homage.

And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the purple and dressed him in his own clothes.

They led him out to crucify him. They enlisted a passer-by, Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull. They offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he refused it. Then they crucified him, and shared out his clothing, casting lots to decide what each should get. It was the third hour when they crucified him.

The inscription giving the charge against him read: 'The king of the Jews.' And they crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said,

C Aha! So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself: come down from the cross!

N The chief priests and the scribes mocked him among themselves in the same way. They said,

C He saved others, he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now, for us to see it and believe.

N Even those who were crucified with him taunted him. When the sixth hour came there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

J Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?

N This means, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood by heard this, they said,

C Listen he is calling on Elijah.

N Someone ran and soaked a sponge in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink, saying,

O Wait and see if Elijah will come to take him down.

N But Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

All kneel and pause a moment.

And the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The centurion, who was standing in front of him, had seen how he died, and he said,

O In truth this man was a son of God.

N There were some women watching from a distance. Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary who was the mother of James the younger, and Joset, and Salome.

These used to follow him and look after him when he was in Galilee. And there were many other women there who had come up to Jerusalem with him.

N It was now evening, and since it was Preparation day (that is the vigil of the Sabbath), there came Joseph of Arimathaea, a prominent member of the Council, who himself lived in hope of seeing the kingdom of God, and he boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate, astonished that he should have died so soon, summoned the centurion and enquired if he was already dead. Having been assured of this by the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph who brought a shroud, took Jesus down from the cross, wrapped him in the shroud and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of Joset were watching and took note of where he was laid.

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God of all hope,
we pray for our world with all its beauty and need.
We thank you for the love in our lives that is
a mirror of your unending love.

May all creation know your compassion this Lent
and may we take courage to share it, especially with
those who don't have what they need.

In our time, we hear the same words you spoke to Moses:
'I will be with you,' when you ask us to do courageous things.

Through our prayer, fasting and almsgiving,
move us to act in the company of your Spirit,
showing compassion and acting for justice
to renew the face of the Earth,
now and for all future generations.

We ask this in the name of Christ.

Amen.