

The Readings for Palm Sunday, March 29th

The First Reading

Isaiah 50:4-9a

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 he wakens-- wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. 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; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

Psalm 31: 9-16

- 9 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; *
my eye is consumed with sorrow,
and also my throat and my belly.
- 10 For my life is wasted with grief,
and my years with sighing; *
my strength fails me because of affliction,
and my bones are consumed.
- 11 I have become a reproach to all my enemies and even to my
neighbors,
a dismay to those of my acquaintance; *
when they see me in the street they avoid me.
- 12 I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; *
I am as useless as a broken pot.
- 13 For I have heard the whispering of the crowd;
fear is all around; *

they put their heads together against me;
they plot to take my life.

14 But as for me, I have trusted in you, O LORD. *

I have said, "You are my God.

15 My times are in your hand; *

rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.

16 Make your face to shine upon your servant, *

and in your loving-kindness save me."

The Holy Gospel

Mark 14: 12-25

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to him, 'Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, "The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.' So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal. When it was evening, he came with the twelve. And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.' They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, 'Surely, not I?' He said to them, 'It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.' While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'

The Prayers of the People

The Cantor sings the introduction. All respond as indicated.

Cantor: Gracious God, You carry us through our days. You know every word on our tongue, every hair on our head. You know the dreams in our hearts, and the weight of our bones. You also know the weariness we bring with us into this space. So with honesty we come before you, both with hearts full of gratitude and with prayers on our lips. Let us pray together as the People of God, saying, God in your mercy,

All:



Hear our prayer.

Intercessor: Gracious God, we thank you for the gifts of this life that bring us joy. For birthday candles and sunrises, for handwritten cards and jobs that we are passionate about. For stories that can make us laugh until we cry, and for friends that feel like family.

Cantor: God in your joyful mercy,

All:



Hear our prayer.

Intercessor: Gracious Loving God, grant courage to each member of your Church to be your loving hands throughout the world, to do your will as ministers of inclusion, action and peace and to remember that our full humanity is welcome here.

Cantor: God in your kind mercy,

All:



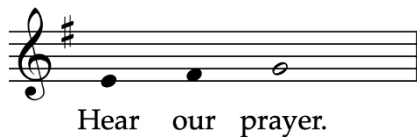
Hear our prayer.

Intercessor: Heal the wounds of this nation. Guide us to be present with our neighbors and give us patience to actively listen so we may better understand

one another. Grant wisdom to our Leaders. Help us to heal a World in transition.

Cantor: *God in your blessed mercy,*

All:



Intercessor: Creator God, there is so much grief, strife and discord in the World. Guide refugees to safety and fortify the hearts of those who will receive them. Grant courage to those in danger and peace to those who feel lost. Wrap your arms around those whose grief will not let go. Give us wisdom to find ways to better care for your creation.

Cantor: *God in your profound mercy,*

All:



Intercessor: Gracious God, aid all those in any kind of need or trouble: For those whose lives are closely linked with ours, and those connected to us as part of the human family. Let us pray together for: **Amy, Bea, Carol, Charles, Craig, Dal, David, Ethan, Jan, Jay, Jennifer, Jennifer D., Juan Carlos, Karen, Katie, Nick, Paula, Reuben, Sara, Stephanie, Terry, and Tom.** We pray that all those who are struggling with addiction, depression or illness will find relief. And we pray for all those in this country and around the world who have been impacted by violence, war, accidents, or natural disaster.

Cantor: *God in your infinite mercy,*

All:



Intercessor: We pray for those serving abroad and their families, and for all who have been wounded or held hostage. We pray for those who have died. We pray for all who know loss and mourn loved ones.

Cantor: *God in your healing mercy,*

All:



Intercessor: We pray for the intentions of the individuals in this community – stated now - either silently or aloud.

Cantor: *God, in your perfect mercy,*

All:



The Passion According to Matthew

Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?” But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that

they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Crucify him!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him!"

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and 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. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him 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 among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and 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." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him,

saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"