

The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday

Year A

Holy Week

The Liturgy of the Palms

When circumstances permit, the congregation may gather at a place apart from the church, so that all may go into the church in procession.

The branches of palm are distributed to the people before the service.

The following anthem is said, the people standing.

Priest: Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord.

People: *Peace in heaven and glory in the highest.*

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Assist us mercifully with your help, O Lord God of our salvation, that we may enter with joy upon the contemplation of those mighty acts, whereby you have given us life and immortality; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A Reading from the Gospel of St. Matthew 21:1-11

Celebrant reads the following:

And when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, 2 saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. 3 If any one says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and he will send them immediately." 4 This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 "Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass." 6 The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; 7 they brought the ass and the colt, and put their garments on them, and he sat thereon. 8 Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the

road. 9 And the crowds that went before him and that followed him shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" 10 And when he entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, "Who is this?" 11 And the crowds said, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee."

The Blessing of the Palms

Priest or Celebrant reads the following:

Let us pray:

It is right to praise you, Almighty God, for the acts of love by which you have redeemed us through our Lord Jesus Christ. On this day he entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed as King of kings by those who spread their garments and branches of palm along his way.

Bless these branches † to be for us signs of our Lord's victory, and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our Lord and King, and follow him in the way that leads to Eternal Life; who lives and reigns in glory with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. *Amen*

The following anthem is said:

Priest: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

People: Hosanna in the highest.

The Procession

Priest: Let us go forth in peace.

People: In the name of Christ. Amen.

During the Procession, all hold branches in their hands. The congregation and choir sing "All glory, laud and honor" or some other suitable hymn.

At the conclusion of the Procession the following prayer is said by the Celebrant at the Altar.

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Collect of the Day

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty and ever living God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A Reading from Isaiah 45:21-25

Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. ²² "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. ²³ By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.'²⁴ "Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed, all who were incensed against him. ²⁵ In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory."

Psalm 22:1-11

Deus, Deus meus

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? *
and are so far from my cry
and from the words of my distress?
- 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; *
by night as well, but I find no rest.
- 3 Yet you are the Holy One, *
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
- 4 Our forefathers put their trust in you; *
they trusted, and you delivered them.
- 5 They cried out to you and were delivered; *
they trusted in you and were not put to shame.
- 6 But as for me, I am a worm and no man, *
scorned by all and despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me laugh me to scorn; *
they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,
- 8 "He trusted in the LORD; let him deliver him; *
let him rescue him, if he delights in him."
- 9 Yet you are he who took me out of the womb, *
and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.
- 10 I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; *
you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.
- 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, *
and there is none to help.

A Reading from Philippians 2:5-11

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. Matthew 26:36-27:54

The customary responses before and after the Gospel are omitted.

*The congregation remains seated for the first part of the Passion. **At the verse which mentions our Lord's arrival at Golgotha all stand.***

Narrator	Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them
Jesus	“Sit here, while I go yonder and pray.”
Narrator	And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them,

Jesus “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.”

Narrator And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed,

Jesus My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Narrator And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter,

Jesus “So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Narrator Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed,

Jesus “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done.”

Narrator And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them,

Jesus “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.”

Narrator While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the

people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I shall kiss is the man; seize him." And he came up to Jesus at once and said,

Reader 1

"Hail, Master!"

Narrator

And he kissed him. Jesus said to him,

Jesus

"Friend, why are you hear?"

Narrator

Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, and struck the slave of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

Jesus

"Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"

Narrator

Then Jesus said to the crowd,

Jesus

"Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Narrator

Then all the disciples forsook him and fled. Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter followed him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest,

Narrator
(continued)

and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said,

Reader 2

“This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.’”

Narrator

And the high priest stood up and said,

Reader 1

“Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?”

Narrator

But Jesus was silent.

Reader 1

“I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

Jesus

“You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Narrator

Then the high priest tore his robes, and said,

Reader 1

“He has uttered blasphemy! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgment?”

Reader 2

“He deserves death!”

Narrator

Then they spat in his face, and struck him; and some slapped him, saying,

Reader 2 “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”

Narrator Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a maid came up to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it before them all saying

Reader 1 “I do not know what you mean?”

Narrator And when he went out to the porch, another maid saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” And again he denied it with an oath,

Reader 1 “I do not know the man.”

Narrator After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter,

Reader 2 “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.”

Narrator Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear,

Reader 1 “I do not know the man!”

Narrator And immediately the cock crowed. And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death; and they bound him and led him away and delivered him to Pilate the governor. →

Narrator
(continued)

When Judas, his betrayer, saw that he was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying

Reader 1

“I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.”

Reader 2

“What is that to us? See to it yourself.”

Narrator

And throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, Judas departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said,

Reader 2

“It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.”

Narrator

So they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord directed me.”

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him,

Reader 1

“Are you the King of the Jews?”

Jesus

“You have said so.”

Narrator

But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he made no answer. Then Pilate said to him

Reader 1 "Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?"

Narrator But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge; so that the governor wondered greatly. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them,

Reader 1 "Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?"

Narrator For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much over him today in a dream." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the people to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them,

Reader 1 "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?"

Congregation "Barabbas"

Reader 1 "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

Congregation "Let him be crucified."

Reader 1 "Why, what evil has he done?"

Narrator But they shouted all the more,

Congregation **“Let him be crucified!”**

Narrator So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying,

Reader 1 “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.”

Narrator And all the people answered,

Congregation **“His blood be on us and on our children!”**

Narrator Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe upon him, and plaiting a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him they mocked him,

Reader 2 “Hail, King of the Jews!”

Narrator And they spat upon him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him. As they went out, they came upon a man of Cyrene, Simon by name; this man they compelled to carry his cross.

ALL STAND - Narrator pauses...

- Narrator And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull), they offered him wine to drink, mingled with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots; then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews." Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying,
- Reader 2 "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."
- Narrator So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying,
- Reader 2 "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him; for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"
- Narrator And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.
- Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice,
- Jesus "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"

Narrator that is, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And some of the bystanders hearing it said,

Reader 2 “This man is calling Elijah.”

Narrator And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said,

Reader 2 “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.”

Narrator And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

[Pause for a moment of silence]

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and 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, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe, and said,

Reader 2 “Truly this was the Son of God!”

In place of a sermon three minutes of silent prayer will be maintained.

