

**PALM SUNDAY (B)**  
**March 25, 2018**

# **A Love to the End**

Mosaic: *Jesus is Nailed on the Cross*,  
Church of the Sepulcher, Jerusalem



## **I. A LOOK AT THE THREE READINGS**

### **FIRST READING** (Is 50:4-7)

#### **Giftedness**

<sup>4\*</sup> The Lord God has given me  
a well-trained tongue,  
That I might know how to answer the weary  
a word that will waken them.  
Morning after morning  
he wakens my ear to hear as disciples do;

#### **Non-resistance**

<sup>5</sup>The Lord GOD opened my ear;  
**I did not refuse,**  
**did not turn away.\***  
<sup>6</sup>**I gave my back** to those who beat me,  
my cheeks to those who tore out my  
beard;\*  
**My face I did not hide**  
**from insults and spitting.<sup>c</sup>**  
<sup>7</sup>The Lord GOD is my help,  
therefore I am not disgraced;  
Therefore I have set my face like flint,  
knowing that I shall not be put to shame.<sup>d</sup>

**THE FOCUS: Non-violent Resistance**

### **REFLECTIONS**

Jesus fought for God and neighbors all the days of his life, but at the final moment, he makes an act of supreme sacrifice, to cap all his other small sacrifices.

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### **RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 22:8-9, 17-20, 23-24)

**MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU  
ABANDONED ME?**

### **SECOND READING** (Phil 2:6-11)

#### **Obedience and humility**

<sup>6</sup>Though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
something to be grasped.\*  
<sup>7e</sup>Rather, he emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
coming in human likeness,\*  
and found human in appearance,  
<sup>8</sup>he **humbled** himself,  
becoming **obedient to death**, even  
death on a cross.\*

#### **Exaltation**

<sup>9</sup>Because of this, God greatly exalted him  
and bestowed on him the name\*  
that is above every name,  
<sup>10h</sup>that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,\*  
of those in heaven and on earth and  
under the earth,  
<sup>11i</sup>and every tongue confess that  
Jesus Christ is Lord,\*  
to the glory of God the Father.

**THE FOCUS: Being Obedient and Humble**

### **REFLECTIONS**

Jesus' suffering gives meaning to our little private sufferings.

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**GOSPEL READING** (Mk 14:1—15:47)

***Plotting the Life of Jesus through treachery***

<sup>1\*</sup> <sup>a</sup>The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were to take place in two days' time. So the chief priests and the scribes were seeking a way to arrest him by treachery and put him to death. <sup>2</sup>They said, "Not during the festival, for fear that there may be a riot among the people."

***Jesus and the woman with alabaster jar in Bethany***

<sup>3\*</sup> <sup>b</sup>When he was in Bethany reclining at table in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of perfumed oil, costly genuine spikenard. She broke the alabaster jar and poured it on his head.

***Adverse reaction***

<sup>4</sup>There were some who were indignant. "Why has there been this waste of perfumed oil? <sup>5</sup>It could have been sold for more than three hundred days' wages and the money given to the poor." They were infuriated with her.

***Jesus' Defense***

<sup>6</sup>Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you make trouble for her? She has done a good thing for me. <sup>7</sup>The poor you will always have with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them, but you will not always have me. <sup>8</sup>She has done what she could. She has anticipated anointing my body for burial. <sup>9</sup>Amen, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

***Judas Iscariot***

<sup>10c</sup>Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went off to the chief priests to hand him over to them. <sup>11</sup>When they heard him they were pleased and promised to pay him money. Then he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

***Preparation for the Passover***

<sup>12d</sup>On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb,\* his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" <sup>13</sup>He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you,

carrying a jar of water.\* Follow him. <sup>14</sup>Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"" <sup>15</sup>Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there." <sup>16</sup>The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

***Passover at sundown (6 PM) and announcement of betrayal***

<sup>17e</sup>When it was evening, he came with the Twelve. <sup>18\*</sup>And as they reclined at table and were eating, Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."

***The traitor is vaguely identified***

<sup>19</sup>They began to be distressed and to say to him, one by one, "Surely it is not I?" <sup>20</sup>He said to them, "One of the Twelve, the one who dips with me into the dish. <sup>21</sup>For the Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him,\* but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born."

***The Institution of the Eucharist (within the Passover Meal)***

<sup>22\*</sup> While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." <sup>23</sup>Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. <sup>24</sup>He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed\* for many. <sup>25</sup>Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

***Mount of Olives (the apostles' dispersal, Jesus' resurrection)***

<sup>26g</sup>Then, after singing a hymn,\* they went out to the Mount of Olives. <sup>27\*</sup> <sup>h</sup>Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will have your faith shaken, for it is written:

'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be dispersed.'

<sup>28</sup>But after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee."

***Peter's (weak) loyalty***

<sup>29</sup>Peter said to him, "Even though all should have their faith shaken, mine will not be." <sup>30</sup>Then Jesus said to him, "Amen, I say to you, this very night before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times." <sup>31</sup>But he vehemently replied, "Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you." And they all spoke similarly.

***Gethsemane and Jesus' prayer***

<sup>32\*</sup> <sup>i</sup>Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."<sup>33</sup> He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. <sup>34</sup>Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch." <sup>35</sup>He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; <sup>36</sup>he said, "Abba, Father,\* all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will."

***Peter asleep***

<sup>37</sup>When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour?" <sup>38\*</sup> <sup>k</sup>Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." <sup>39</sup>Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing. <sup>40</sup>Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him. <sup>41</sup>He returned a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. <sup>42</sup>Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is at hand."

***Judas led the arrest***

<sup>43</sup>Then, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. <sup>44</sup>His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely." <sup>45</sup>He came and immediately went over to him and said, "Rabbi."

And he kissed him. <sup>46</sup>At this they laid hands on him and arrested him.

***People too betrayed him***

<sup>47</sup>One of the bystanders drew his sword, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. <sup>48</sup>Jesus said to them in reply, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to seize me?" <sup>49</sup>Day after day I was with you teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me; but that the scriptures may be fulfilled." <sup>50</sup>And they all left him and fled. <sup>51</sup>Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him, <sup>52</sup>but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked.

<sup>53\*</sup> <sup>m</sup>They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. <sup>54</sup>Peter followed him at a distance into the high priest's courtyard and was seated with the guards, warming himself at the fire. <sup>55</sup>The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none. <sup>56</sup>Many gave false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. <sup>57\*</sup> Some took the stand and testified falsely against him, alleging, <sup>58n</sup> "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands.'" <sup>59</sup>Even so their testimony did not agree.

***The High Priest and the Blasphemy***

<sup>60</sup>The high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus, saying, "Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?" <sup>61\*</sup> But he was silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him and said to him, "Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?" <sup>62o</sup> Then Jesus answered, "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.'"

<sup>63</sup>At that the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further need have we of witnesses? <sup>64</sup>You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as deserving to die. <sup>65p</sup> Some began to spit on him. They

blindfolded him and struck him and said to him, “Prophecy!” And the guards greeted him with blows.

**Peter’s denial three times**

<sup>66r</sup>While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the high priest’s maids came along. <sup>67</sup>Seeing Peter warming himself, she looked intently at him and said, “You too were with the Nazarene, Jesus.” <sup>68\*</sup>But he denied it saying, “I neither know nor understand what you are talking about.” So he went out into the outer court. [Then the cock crowed.] <sup>69</sup>The maid saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.” <sup>70</sup>Once again he denied it. A little later the bystanders said to Peter once more, “Surely you are one of them; for you too are a Galilean.” <sup>71</sup>He began to curse and to swear, “I do not know this man about whom you are talking.”

**The cock crowed**

<sup>72r</sup>And immediately a cock crowed a second time. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times.” He broke down and wept.

**Pilate**

**Mark 15:1** <sup>1a</sup>As soon as morning came, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin, held a council.\* They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate.<sup>b</sup> <sup>2</sup>Pilate questioned him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”\* He said to him in reply, “You say so.” <sup>3</sup>The chief priests accused him of many things. <sup>4</sup>Again Pilate questioned him, “Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of.” <sup>5</sup>Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.<sup>6\*</sup> <sup>c</sup>Now on the occasion of the feast he used to release to them one prisoner whom they requested.

**Barabbas released, instead of Jesus**

<sup>7</sup>A man called Barabbas\* was then in prison along with the rebels who had committed murder in a rebellion. <sup>8</sup>The crowd came forward and began to ask him to do for them as he was accustomed. <sup>9</sup>Pilate answered, “Do you want me

to release to you the king of the Jews?” <sup>10</sup>For he knew that it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. <sup>11</sup>But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. <sup>12</sup>Pilate again said to them in reply, “Then what [do you want] me to do with [the man you call] the king of the Jews?” <sup>13\*</sup>They shouted again, “Crucify him.” <sup>14</sup>Pilate said to them, “Why? What evil has he done?” They only shouted the louder, “Crucify him.” <sup>15\*</sup>So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

**The Soldiers**

<sup>16\*</sup> <sup>d</sup>The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort. <sup>17</sup>They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him. <sup>18</sup>They began to salute him with, “Hail, King of the Jews!” <sup>19</sup>and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him. They knelt before him in homage. <sup>20</sup>And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him.<sup>21e</sup> They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian,\* who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.<sup>22f</sup> They brought him to the place of Golgotha (which is translated Place of the Skull). <sup>23</sup>They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it.) <sup>24\*</sup> <sup>g</sup>Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. <sup>25</sup>It was nine o’clock in the morning\* when they crucified him. <sup>26\*</sup> The inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” <sup>27h</sup> With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left. <sup>28</sup>

**Like the soldiers**

<sup>29\*</sup> <sup>i</sup>Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, <sup>30</sup>save yourself by coming down from the cross.” <sup>31</sup>Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes,

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mocked him among themselves and said, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. <sup>32j</sup>Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also kept abusing him.

### *Three Hours of Darkness*

<sup>33</sup>At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. <sup>34k</sup>And at three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*”<sup>\*</sup> which is translated, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

### *Misunderstanding*

<sup>35</sup>Some of the bystanders who heard it said, “Look, he is calling Elijah.” <sup>36</sup>One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink, saying, “Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down.”

### *Last Breath*

<sup>37</sup>Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. <sup>38\*</sup>The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. <sup>3</sup>

### *The Centurion and the Women*

<sup>39\*</sup> When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!” <sup>40\* m</sup>There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome. <sup>41</sup>These women had followed him when he was in Galilee and ministered to him. There were also many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

### *After 5 PM, before 6 PM (Joseph and Pilate)*

<sup>42n</sup>When it was already evening, since it was the day of preparation, the day before the sabbath, <sup>43</sup>Joseph of Arimathea,\* a distinguished member of the council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God, came and courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. <sup>44</sup>Pilate was amazed that he was already dead. He summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus had already died. <sup>45</sup>And when he learned of it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

<sup>46</sup>Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down, wrapped him in the linen cloth and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb.

### *Women at the Burial*

<sup>47</sup>Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses watched where he was laid.

### THE FOCUS: The Passion and Death of Jesus

### COMMENTARY

- C.14: v.1. The setting is on the Passover Feast (or Feast of the Unleavened Bread), that celebrates the liberation of Israel from the slavery in Egypt.
  - At this time, the Jews are busy preparing for this Passover Meal.
- V. 1 begins the passion of Christ.
  - But, in contrast, the religious leaders (the chief priests and the scribes) are busy preparing to kill Jesus.
  - They want to kill him without so much commotion.
- Vv. 2-4. In another place called Bethany, while Jesus was eating at the house of Simon the leper, suddenly a woman comes in and pours a costly perfumed oil on the head of Jesus (v.3).
  - The author does not mention the intent of the woman. It does not also mention if the woman is a sinner or a woman of disrepute.
  - Inside the house, some were strongly against the woman’s actuation (v.4). What a waste of money! Wrong decision of the woman. Money could have been given to the poor!
- Vv. 6-9. In v.6, Jesus intervenes for her.
  - The unnamed woman is doing a favor to him. The woman has decided wisely what to do with her expensive perfume. Time is running out for Jesus. The woman has taken advantage of the time left of Jesus.
- V.7 compares that the poor will stay as against Jesus who will not be here forever.

- V.8 now explicitates the purpose of the anointing.
  - In v.9, Jesus commends what the woman has done.
- Vv. 10-11. Judas Iscariot must have been present in that meal.
  - In contrast to the woman, he goes off to the chief priests to pave the way for the arrest of Jesus. Judas betrays Jesus by giving a clue to those who seek his life. Money seems to be the main motive of Judas.
  - The chief priests were moneyed people. They were willing to spend as long as they silence Jesus. They appear to be so threatened by the presence and teachings of Jesus.
- Vv. 12-16. V.12 picks up the setting provided by v.1 (the Feast of the unleavened Bread).
  - The disciples prepare for the passover meal. They follow Jesus' instructions and everything fall into place as Jesus has said.
- Vv. 17-21. Now it is time to eat the passover meal. It is also the time for Jesus to announce the one who betrays him. He does not name names. No one is suspect. Everyone denies one will betray Jesus.
  - At this point where is Judas?
  - Betrayal is a grave sin. Jesus says, "Better for him not to have been born."
  - Judas did not contribute anything for our salvation.
  - Some people would like to thank Judas for betraying Jesus, for without his betrayal we would not have been saved! What a distorted idea, to justify acts of betrayal!
- Vv. 22-25. Within the context of the joyful and reflective passover meal, Jesus institutes the eucharist, a meal of self-giving and life-giving. He does this also in the bigger but sad context of the plotting of his life by the chief priests and the betrayal of Judas. There were mixed feelings on the part of Jesus. No one should be put to death during the Passover festivities. Instead, there should be liberation, like freedom of a prisoner, etc.
- Vv. 26-31. After they have eaten the passover meal, it was time to go home, but the apostles still remain behind (v.26).
  - Jesus led them to the Mt. of Olives (to pray.), a 20-minute walk from the site of the passover (Cenacle).
  - Jesus predicts how his disciples will be dispersed because of what will happen to him (v.27).
  - Peter reacts. He promises to be different from the others. His faith will never be shaken (v.29).
  - Jesus reminds him of his weakness. Peter denies that he will "deny" Jesus. He does not know what he is saying. All else say the same.
- Vv. 37-42. Jesus goes back to his disciples who are asleep. He encourages them to pray, not to undergo the difficult test (trial).
  - He exhorts them to keep vigil three times, yet his disciples were too tired.
  - After the third time, Jesus says, "The hour has come."
  - The disciples must get up and start moving. They must witness how Jesus will be persecuted.
- Vv. 43-46. The three named disciples would have been surprised at the sight of Judas.
  - How come Judas is in the company of this crowd armed with lethal weapons?
  - Judas did not have any qualms appearing to Jesus and to his fellow disciples. His true colors appeared. Judas and the crowd were under the control of the chief priests, the scribes and the elders (Sadducees). They shifted alliances from Jesus to the Sadducees. The crowds did not know really

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- whom they were arresting. They needed a sign (Judas' kiss).
- Vv. 47-52. In that scene, anything could happen.
    - A bystander (we don't know if he is a sympathizer of Jesus or not) cut the ear of the high priest's servant. What is he doing there? Without reason, he became violent.
    - Jesus protests; how come he is treated like a robber, as if he would escape their arrest?
    - Jesus sees the point of submitting to his arrest, "that the scriptures may be fulfilled."
    - With these words, they all fled. They were ashamed of themselves (v.51).
    - Another unidentified man appears. Maybe a disciple of Jesus. He fled naked to elude arrest.
  - Vv. 53:59. Who are those who led Jesus away? Did they not run away? A story like this can have loopholes. It does not need to be a perfectly scripted story.
  - V.53 makes the plan of the Sadducees succeed. Jesus comes face to face with the plotters.
  - V.54 gives a short note about Peter. In v.55, the Sanhedrin (supreme court) begins its trial (mock trial by present day standard).
    - Many are encouraged to falsely testify, inconsistent it may be.
  - Vv. 60-65. Jesus is asked to answer false testimonies.
    - Why should he? Why should he waste his time entertaining malice?
    - The high priest finds a good evidence when Jesus claims to be the Messiah. This "blasphemy" is enough reason to put him to death.
    - What happened to the false testimonies?
    - The Sanhedrin and the crowds cannot accept his identity as the Messiah.
    - This is a rejection of Jesus as the Messiah.
    - Their religion does not allow anyone to pose as the Messiah.
  - Vv. 66-72. The scene shifts to Peter.
    - True enough, Peter denies Jesus three times. The cock crowing reminds him of his foolishness and weakness. But he is sorry and repentant. He could have performed better: to proudly accept he is an avid disciple of Jesus, to proudly say he is not afraid to die with Jesus.
    - He squandered his opportunity to show his loyalty to Jesus. Not much different from Judas. How will Peter redeem himself now?
  - Vv. 15:1-6. The plotters bring Jesus to Pilate.
    - Pilate was the procurator (or governor) of Judea.
    - Pilate has a different question: Are you the king of the Jews? He has a different concern because he represents the Roman Emperor.
    - But Jesus accepts he is king of the Jews without clarifying what he meant.
    - Pilate draws Jesus to rebut all the accusations against him, but he remains quiet as before.
    - In v.6, Pilate gives him hope of his release.
  - Vv. 7-15. But the people prefer to release Barabbas, a rebel and a murderer.
    - Pilate knew beforehand the motive of the chief priests: "out of envy"
    - Pilate should release Jesus because there is no strong ground to kill him.
    - But Pilate succumbs to unreasonable pressure. He is guilty of "pleasing the misguided crowd." He is a politician. He concurs with the chief priests and the crowd. Barabbas must be freed; Jesus must die.
  - Vv.16-27 enumerate what the soldiers have done to Jesus.
    - They led him away (v.16).

- They clothed him in purple (v.17).
- They weaved crown of thorns (v.17).
- They saluted him (v.18).
- They kept striking his head, spitting on him... they knelt... (v.19).
- They stripped him, dressed him..., led him out... (v.20).
- They forced Simon, a passer-by, to carry his cross (v.21).
- They brought him to Golgotha (v.22).
- They gave him wine (v.23).
- They crucified him.
- They divided his garments...
- V.25 gives the time of his crucifixion (9 AM).
- V.25 states the accusation, "The King of the Jews."
  - They crucified two revolutionaries...
  - Why did they crucify two more, while they set Barabbas free?
- Vv. 29-32. Passers-by join in mocking Jesus. They dare him to save himself.
  - The chief priests and scribes mock him also. They are not finished yet. They too dare Jesus to come down from the cross.
  - The revolutionaries too mock him.
- Vv 33-36. At 12 noon to 3 PM, there was darkness (v.33).
  - In v.34, Jesus cries aloud his feelings of being abandoned. He has been hanging on the cross for six hours.
  - In v.35, some bystanders misunderstand him. Jesus is not coming down. No way.
  - He is determined to stay there until he dies.
  - He is listening to his Father who seems to have abandoned him.
  - Elijah is not coming to rescue him.
  - Simply, it is time to die.
- Vv. 37-38. V.37 describes his last second. V.38 is a side note. It is open for interpretations.
- Vv 39-41. In v.39, here comes the centurion who witnessed from start to finish his suffering beginning with his arrest up to

his death.

- He cannot help but express his belief, which can cost him his job and his life: "Truly this man was the Son of God."
- Precisely, his job was to silence him so that Jesus could not claim once and for all that he is the Son of God.
- He implies that Jesus was right, everyone else was wrong about him.
- V.40 indicates the presence of women. In the beginning of the story, we got an impression that women were not present.
- In v.41, we have all sorts of women, from Galilee, who ministered to his needs and also many other women who journeyed with him to Jerusalem.
  - These are women-disciples.
- Vv. 42-46. Jesus died on Good Friday at three in the afternoon. Now his body must be taken down before the Sabbath which starts at six in the evening.
  - Joseph of Arimathea is a member of the council (Sanhedrin). Quietly he placed his hopes on Jesus for the establishment of the kingdom of God (v.43). He takes courage to ask permission from Pilate to take his body down.
  - Pilate does not give the permission right away. He first consults his centurion to certify his death.The centurion is credible to Pilate and to us at this moment.
- V. 47. In v.47, again women appear. They witness the burial of Jesus.

## REFLECTIONS

The only way to know ourselves as "children of God" or as Christians, is to willingly embrace our own assigned sufferings.

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## **II. TYING THE THREE READINGS TOGETHER TO DEVELOP YOUR SHARING/HOMILY**

The First Reading is about the submissiveness of the suffering servant to his persecutors.

The Second Reading is about the suffering of Christ in humble obedience to the will of the Father.

The Gospel Reading is about the passion of Christ and its details.

How to develop your homily / sharing

The preacher must develop the passion of Christ.

What is the meaning of Christ's Passion?

To Christ, it was a way of showing his love to all of us.

It was also a way to show his obedience to the Father.

Through his passion, Jesus overcame sin and death.

His torturers stopped their foolishness once Jesus died on the cross.

Based on the First Reading, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah.

He was submissive to his (organized) tormentors because of his total trust and confidence in the Lord, that he would not be put to shame.

Based on the Second Reading, through his passion and death, he completed the mystery of incarnation.

It was the only way to his exaltation.

The Gospel Story laboriously presents how Jesus underwent his passion.

It began with the plotting of the chief priests and elders of Israel with the aid of Judas, the traitor, in order to eliminate him.

They used the people to accomplish their goal.

They assigned false witnesses.

They were infuriated at Jesus' claim as the Messiah.

They also used Pilate to crucify him.

Pilate made a bad decision "to crucify him," just to be popular and to please the chief priests, though he knew their motive was "out of envy."

The soldiers did everything to perform their "duties."

We hope there are no more soldiers like them.

They were acting like sick people who enjoyed inflicting pains on the helpless, without knowing the real issues, without due regard to human rights and dignity.

On our part, we better identify ourselves with Christ, not with Judas, not with the chief priests, not with Pilate, not with the soldiers, not with the revolutionaries (thieves).

If we cannot identify ourselves with Christ, at least, we can identify ourselves with Simon of Cyrene, Joseph of Arimathea, and with the women disciples.

Or we can identify ourselves with the disciples who were weak during the crisis, but became strong later on in giving witness, like the centurion.

In the eucharist, we remember the passion of Christ.

In the eucharist, we symbolically participate in his passion (and resurrection).

The eucharist helps us embrace our own little passions (sufferings).

The eucharist gives meaning to our struggles and sufferings.

— **Prepared by Fr. Cielo Almazan, OFM**

## **III. OUR CONTEXT**

Anaesthetized

Cold

Resistant to discomfort

Traitor

Persecutors / torturers

Bribery (CA)