

GOOD FRIDAY (A) **(Celebration of the Lord's Passion)**

1st. READING (Is 52,13-53,12)

It is now when my servant will succeed; he will be exalted and highly praised. Just as many have been horrified at his disfigured appearance: "Is this a man? He does not look like one," so will nations be astounded, kings will stand speechless, for they will see something never told, they will witness something never heard of. Who could believe what we have heard, and to whom has Yahweh revealed his feat? Like a root out of dry ground, like a sapling he grew up before us, with nothing attractive in his appearance, no beauty, no majesty. He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows familiar with grief, a man from whom people hide their face, spurned and considered of no account. Yet ours were the sorrows he bore, ours were the sufferings he endured, although we considered him as one punished by God, stricken and brought low. Destroyed because of our sins, he was crushed for our wickedness. Through his punishment we are made whole; by his wounds we are healed. Like sheep we had all gone astray, each following his own way; but Yahweh laid upon him all our guilt. He was harshly treated, but unresisting and silent, he humbly submitted. Like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before the shearer he did not open his mouth. He was taken away to detention and judgment - what an unthinkable fate! He was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for his people's sin. They made his tomb with the wicked, they put him in the graveyard of the oppressors, though he had done no violence nor spoken in deceit. Yet it was the will of Yahweh to crush him with grief. When he makes himself an offering for sin, he will have a long life and see his descendants. Through him the will of Yahweh is done. For the anguish he suffered, he will see the light and obtain perfect knowledge. My just servant will justify the multitude; he will bear and take away their guilt. Therefore I will give him his portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong. For he surrendered himself to death and was even counted among the wicked, bearing the sins of the multitude and interceding for sinners.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 31)

In you, O Lord, I take refuge, may I never be disgraced;
deliver me in your justice.

Into your hands I commend my spirit; you have
redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

I have become an object of reproach for my foes and
for my neighbors; so horrible to my friends that they
hurry away when they see me in the streets.

I am like the dead, unremembered; I have become like
a broken pot, thrown away, discarded.

But I put my trust in you, O Lord. You are my God;
my days are in your hand. Deliver me from the hand
of my enemies, from those after my skin.

Make your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your love.

Be strong and take courage,
all you who hope in the Lord.

2nd. READING (Heb 4,14-16; 5,7-9)

We have a great High Priest, Jesus, the Son of God, who has entered heaven. Let us, then, hold fast to the faith we profess. Our high priest is not indifferent to our weaknesses, for he was tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sinning. Let us, then, with confidence approach God, the giver of grace; we will obtain mercy and, through his favor, help in due time. Christ, in the days of his mortal life, offered his sacrifice with tears and cries. He prayed to him who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his humble submission. Although he was Son, he learned through suffering what obedience was, and once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for those who obey him.

GOSPEL (Jn 18,1-19,42)

The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

When Jesus had finished speaking, he went with his disciples to the other side of the Kidron Valley. There was a garden there where Jesus entered with his disciples. Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place since Jesus had often met there with his disciples. He led soldiers of the Roman battalion and guards from the chief priests and Pharisees, who went there with lanterns, torches and weapons. Jesus knew all that was going to happen to him; he stepped forward and asked, "Who are you looking for?"

They answered, "Jesus the Nazarene." Jesus said, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, stood there with them. When Jesus said, "I am he," they moved back and fell to the ground. He then asked a second time, "Who are you looking for?" and they answered, "Jesus the Nazarene." Jesus replied, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, let these others go." So what Jesus had said came true: "I have not lost one of those you gave me." Simon Peter had a sword; he drew it and struck Malchus, the High Priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" The guards and the soldiers, with their commander, seized Jesus and bound him; and they took him first to Annas. Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the High Priest that year; and it was Caiaphas who had told the Jews: "It is better that one man should die for the people." Simon Peter with another disciple followed Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the High Priest, they let him enter the courtyard of the High Priest along with Jesus, but Peter had to stay outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the High Priest went out and spoke to the maidservant at the gate and brought Peter in. Then, this servant on duty at the door said to Peter, "So you also are one of his disciples?" But he answered, "I am not." Now the servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire and were standing and warming themselves, because it was cold. Peter was also with them warming himself. The High Priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him, "I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in places where the Jews meet together, either at the assemblies in synagogues or in the Temple. I did not teach secretly. Why then do you ask me? Ask those who heard me, they know what I said." At this reply one of the guards standing by gave Jesus a blow on the face, saying, "Is that the way to answer the High Priest?" Jesus said to him, "If I have spoken wrongly, point it out; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" Then Annas sent him, bound, to Caiaphas, the High Priest. Now Simon Peter stood there warming himself. They said to him, "Surely you also are one of his disciples." He denied it and answered, "I am not." One of the High Priest's servants, a kinsman of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Did I not see you with him in the garden?" Again Peter denied it, and at once the cock crowed.

Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the court of the Roman governor. It was now morning. The Jews didn't enter lest they be made unclean (by coming into the house of a pagan) and be unable to eat the Passover meal. So Pilate went out and asked, "What charge do you bring against this man?" They answered, "If he were not a criminal, we would not be handing him over to you." Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your own law." But they replied, "We ourselves are not allowed to put anyone to death." It was clear from this what kind of death Jesus was to die, according to what Jesus himself had foretold. Pilate then entered the court again, called Jesus and asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "Does this word come from you, or did you hear it from others?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingship does not come from this

world. If I were king like those of this world, my guards would have fought to save me from being handed over to the Jews. But my kingship is not from here." Pilate asked him, "So you are a king?" And Jesus answered, "Just as you say, I am a king. For this I was born and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of truth hears my voice." Pilate said, "What is truth?" Pilate then went out to the Jews again and said, "I find no crime in this man. Now, according to a custom, I must release a prisoner of yours at the Passover. With your agreement I will release for you the King of the Jews." But they insisted and cried out, "Not this man, but Barabbas!" Now Barabbas was a robber.

Then Pilate had Jesus taken away and scourged. The soldiers also twisted thorns into a crown and put it on his head. They threw a cloak of royal purple around his shoulders and began coming up to him and saluting him, "Hail, king of the Jews," and they struck him on the face. Pilate went outside yet another time and said to the Jews, "Look, I am bringing him out and I want you to know that I find no crime in him." Jesus then came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak and Pilate pointed to him saying, "Here is the man!" On seeing him the chief priests and the guards cried out, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate replied, "Take him yourselves and have him crucified, for I find no case against him." The Jews then said, "We have a Law, and according to the Law this man must die because he made himself Son of God." When Pilate heard this he was more afraid. And coming back into the court he asked Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you just as I have power to crucify you?" Jesus replied, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above; therefore the one who handed me over to you is more guilty." From that moment Pilate tried to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who makes himself king is defying Caesar." When Pilate heard this, he had Jesus brought outside to the place called the Stone Floor - in Hebrew Gabbatha - and there he had him seated in the tribune. It was the Preparation Day for the Passover, about noon. So Pilate said to the Jews, "Here is your king." But they cried out, "Away! Take him away! Crucify him!" Pilate replied, "Shall I crucify your king?" And the chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

Bearing his own cross, Jesus went out of the city to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew: Golgotha. There he was crucified and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus was in the middle. Pilate had a notice written and fastened to the cross that read: Jesus the Nazorean, King of the Jews. Many Jewish people saw this title, because the place where Jesus was crucified was very close to the city. It was, moreover, written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. The chief priests said to Pilate, "Do not write: 'The king of the Jews'; but: 'This man claimed to be king of the Jews.'" Pilate answered them, "What I have written, I have written." When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one part for each of them. But as the tunic was woven in one piece from top to bottom, they said,

"Let us not tear it, but cast lots to decide who will get it." This fulfilled the words of Scripture: They divided my clothing among them; they cast lots for my garment. This was what the soldiers did.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister Mary, who was the wife of Cleophas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw the Mother, and the disciple, he said to the Mother, "Woman, this is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "There is your mother." And from that moment the disciple took her to his own home. With that Jesus knew all was now finished and he said, I am thirsty, to fulfil what was written in Scripture. A jar full of bitter wine stood there; so, putting a sponge soaked in the wine on a twig of hyssop, they raised it to his lips Jesus took the wine and said, "It is accomplished." Then he bowed his head and gave up the spirit.

As it was Preparation Day, the Jews did not want the bodies to remain on the cross during the sabbath, for this sabbath was a very solemn day. They asked Pilate to have the legs of the condemned men broken, so they might take away the bodies. The soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who had been crucified with Jesus. When they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead; so they did not break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a lance and immediately there came out blood and water. The one who has seen here gives his witness so that you may believe: his witness is true and He knows that he speaks the truth. All this happened to fulfill the words of Scripture, Not one of his bones shall be broken. Another text says: They shall look on him whom they have pierced. After this, Joseph of Arimathea approached Pilate, for he was a disciple of Jesus, though secretly, for fear of the Jews. And he asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate agreed, so he came and took away the body.

Nicodemus, the man who earlier had come to Jesus by night, also came and brought a jar of myrrh mixed with aloes, about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, following the burial custom of the Jews. There was a garden in the place where Jesus had been crucified, and, in the garden, a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. As the tomb was very near, they buried Jesus there because they had no time left before the Jewish Preparation Day.