

PALM SUNDAY (B)

1st. READING (Is 50,4-7)

The Lord Yahweh has taught me so I speak as his disciple and I know how to sustain the weary. Morning after morning he wakes me up to hear, to listen like a disciple. The Lord Yahweh has opened my ear. I have not rebelled, nor have I withdrawn. I offered my back to those who strike me, my cheeks to those who pulled my beard; neither did I shield my face from blows, spittle and disgrace. I have not despaired, for the Lord Yahweh comes to my help.

So, like a flint I set my face, knowing that I will not be disgraced.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Ps 22)

All who see me make a jest of me;
they sneer and shake their heads.
"He put his trust in the Lord, let the Lord rescue him!
If the Lord is his friend, let him help him!"

Round about me are vicious dogs,
villainous rogues encircling me.
They have tied up my hands and feet.
They can count all my bones,
for they are looking and watching me,

dividing my garments among them
and casting lots for my raiment.
O Lord, be not far from me!
O my strength, come quickly to my help.

I will proclaim your name to my brothers,
I will praise you in the assembly,
"All you who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you sons of Jacob, glorify him!
All you sons of Israel, revere him!"

2nd. READING (Phil 2,6-11)

Though being divine in nature, he did not claim in fact equality with God, but emptied himself, taking on the nature of a servant, made in human likeness, and in his appearance found as a man. He humbled himself by being obedient to death, death on the cross. That is why God exalted him and gave him the Name which outshines all names, so that at the Name of Jesus all knees should bend in heaven, on earth and among the dead, and all tongues proclaim that Christ Jesus is the Lord to the glory of God the Father.

GOSPEL (Mc 15, 1-39)

The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark. Early in the morning, the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the Law (that is, the whole Council or Sanhedrin) had their plan ready. They put Jesus in chains, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "You say so." As the chief priests accused Jesus of many things, Pilate asked him again, "Have you no answer at all? See how many charges they bring against you." But Jesus gave no further answers, so that Pilate wondered. At every Passover festival, Pilate used to free any prisoner the people asked for. Now there was a man called Barabbas, jailed with the rioters who had committed murder in the uprising. When the crowd went up to ask Pilate the usual favor, he said to them, "Do you want me to set free the King of the Jews?" For he realized that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him out of envy. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to ask instead for the release of Barabbas. Pilate replied, "And what shall I do with the man you call King of the Jews?" The crowd shouted back, "Crucify him!" Pilate asked, "What evil has he done?" But they shouted the louder, "Crucify him!"

As Pilate wanted to please the people, he freed Barabbas and after the flogging of Jesus had him handed over to be crucified. The soldiers took him inside the courtyard known as the praetorium and called the rest of their companions. They clothed him in a purple cloak and twisting a crown of thorns, they forced it onto his head. Then they began saluting him, "Long life to the King of the Jews!" With a stick they gave him blows on the head and spat on him; then they knelt down pretending to worship him. When they had finished mocking him, they pulled off the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. On the way they met Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country, and forced him to carry the cross of Jesus. When they had led him to the place called Golgotha, which means the Skull, they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he would not take it. Then they nailed him to the cross and divided his clothes among themselves, casting lots to decide what each should take. It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The statement of his offense was displayed above his head and it read, "The King of the

Jews." They also crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. People passing by laughed at him, shook their head and jeered, "Aha! So you are able to tear down the Temple and build it up again in three days. Now save yourself and come down from the cross!" In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the Law mocked him saying to one another, "The man who saved others cannot save himself. Let's see the Messiah, the king of Israel, come down from his cross and then we will believe in him." Even the men who were crucified with Jesus insulted him.

When noon came, darkness fell over the whole land and lasted until three o'clock; and at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani?" which means "My God, my God, why have you deserted me?" As soon as they heard these words, some of the bystanders said, "Listen! He is calling for Elijah." And one of them went quickly to fill a sponge with bitter wine and, putting it on a reed, gave him to drink saying, "Now let's see whether Elijah comes to take him down." But Jesus uttered a loud cry and gave up his spirit. And immediately the curtain which enclosed the Temple sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The captain who was standing in front of him saw how Jesus died and heard the cry he gave; and he said, "Truly, this man was the Son of God."