

April 17th, 2011 Sunday of the Passion

Introduction to the Day

Today's liturgy begins with a palm procession, commemorating Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Quickly the tone of the service changes as we meditate upon Jesus' passion and death. Though Jesus is obedient even unto death on the cross, he is exalted by God. We gather to remember his offering for the life of the world, and to be fed by his life-giving mercy. This holy week will culminate in the celebration of the Three Days of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection.

After a moment of silent meditation to prepare ourselves for worship, we will begin the liturgy.

Prayers of the People

As we return to the waters of baptism during this season of Lent, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

We pray that the same mind be in your church as was in Christ Jesus; that we continue to bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord. God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray that the earth, the seas, the stars, and every living creature bow before you; that all human beings be humble stewards of the world we call home. God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray that those with authority show great mercy; that war-weary nations be sustained by your word; that innocent victims not be condemned. God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray that you feed the hungry; free the captives; clothe the naked; heal the sick; end torture; and turn our swords into plowshares. God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

We pray that all of us, who desert, deny, or betray you, be forgiven; that during this Holy Week ears are opened to the life-giving story of your death and resurrection. God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Hold us in communion with the faithful witnesses who have gone before us, until that day

when we join them at the feast that is to come. God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

Into your hands, God of abundant grace, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

Lector: Please read the introduction, then the citation (i.e.. “The First Reading is from the.... chapter of ...” - then read the text.)

First Reading – *The servant of the Lord expresses absolute confidence in his final vindication, despite the fact that he has been struck and spit upon. This characteristic of the servant played an important role in the early church’s understanding of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus.*

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?

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Psalm 31:9–16

Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble;
my eye is consumed with sorrow,
and also my throat and my belly.

**For my life is wasted with grief, and my years with sighing;
my strength fails me because of affliction,
and my bones are consumed.**

I am the scorn of my enemies, a disgrace to my neighbors,
a dismay to my acquaintances;
when they see me in the street they avoid me.

**Like the dead I am forgotten, out of mind;
I am as useless as a broken pot.**

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.

**But as for me, I have trusted in you, O LORD.
I have said, "You are my God.**

My times are in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.

**Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love."**

Second Reading - *Paul uses an early Christian hymn to help us comprehend Jesus' obedient selflessness on the cross and how God has made Christ lord over all reality. The perspective of the cross becomes the way we rightly understand God, Christ, our own lives, and fellowship within the community of Christ.*

Philippians 2: 5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death —
even death on a cross.
Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.