

April 14, 2019

Palm Sunday - Passion of Our Lord

Luke 22:14-23:56

When the hour came, he [Jesus] took his place at table with the apostles. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it again until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; for I tell you that from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.

21 "And yet behold, the hand of the one who is to betray me is with me on the table; 22 for the Son of Man indeed goes as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed." 23 And they began to debate among themselves who among them would do such a deed. 24 Then an argument broke out among them about which of them should be regarded as the greatest. 25 He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and those in authority over them are addressed as 'Benefactors'; 26 but among you it shall not be so. Rather, let the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. 27 For who is greater: the one seated at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one seated at table? I am among you as the one who serves. 28 It is you who have stood by me in my trials; 29 and I confer a kingdom on you, just as my Father has conferred one on me, 30 that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 31 "Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, 32 but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers." 33 He said to him, "Lord, I am prepared to go to prison and to die with you." 34 But he replied, "I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows this day, you will deny three times that you know me." 35 He said to them, "When I sent you forth without a money bag or a sack or sandals, were you in need of anything?" "No, nothing," they replied. 36 He said to them, "But now one who has a money bag should take it, and likewise a sack, and one who does not have a sword should sell his cloak and buy one. 37 For I tell you that this scripture must be fulfilled in me, namely, 'He was counted among the wicked'; and indeed what is written about me is coming to fulfillment." 38 Then they said, "Lord, look, there are two swords here." But he replied, "It is enough!"

39 Then going out he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. 40 When he arrived at the place he said to them, "Pray that you may not undergo the test." 41 After withdrawing about a stone's throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." 43 (And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. 44 He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground.) 45 When he rose from prayer and returned to his disciples, he found them sleeping from grief. 46 He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not undergo the test." 47 While he was still speaking, a crowd approached and in front was one of the Twelve, a man named Judas. He went up to Jesus to kiss him. 48 Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" 49 His disciples realized what was about to happen, and they asked, "Lord, shall we strike with a sword?" 50 And one of them struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. 51 But Jesus said in reply, "Stop, no more of this!" Then he touched the servant's ear and healed him. 52 And Jesus said to the chief priests and temple guards and elders who had come for him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? 53 Day after day I was with you in the temple area, and you did not seize me; but this is your hour, the time for the power of darkness." 54 After arresting him they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest; Peter was following at a distance. 55 They lit a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat around it, and Peter sat down with them. 56 When a maid saw him seated in the light, she looked intently at him and said, "This man too was with him." 57 But he denied it saying, "Woman, I do not know him." 58 A short while later someone else saw him and said, "You too are one of them"; but Peter answered, "My friend, I am not." 59 About an hour later, still another insisted, "Assuredly, this man too was with him, for he also is a Galilean." 60 But Peter said, "My friend, I do not know what you are talking about." Just as he was saying this, the cock crowed, 61 and the Lord turned and looked at Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." 62 He went out and began to weep bitterly. 63 The men who held Jesus in custody were ridiculing and beating him. 64 They blindfolded him and questioned him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" 65 And they reviled him in saying many other things against him.

66 When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. 67 They said, "If you are the Messiah, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, 68 and if I question, you will not respond. 69 But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." 70 They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." 71 Then they said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth." 1 Then the whole assembly of them arose and brought him before Pilate. 2 They brought charges against him, saying, "We found this man misleading our people; he opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar and maintains that he is the Messiah, a king." 3 Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." 4 Pilate then addressed the chief priests and the crowds, "I find this man not guilty." 5 But they were adamant and said; "He is inciting the people with his teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to here." 6 On hearing this Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean; 7 and upon learning that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod who was in Jerusalem at that time. 8 Herod was very glad to see Jesus; he had been wanting to see him for a long time, for he had heard about him and had been hoping to see him perform some sign. 9 He questioned him at length, but he gave him no answer. 10 The chief priests and scribes, meanwhile, stood by accusing him harshly. 11 (Even) Herod and his soldiers treated him contemptuously and mocked him, and after clothing him in resplendent garb, he sent him back to Pilate. 12 Herod and Pilate became friends that very day, even though they had been enemies formerly. 13 Pilate then summoned the chief priests, the rulers, and the people 14 and said to them, "You brought this man to me and accused him of inciting the people to revolt. I have conducted my investigation in your presence and have not found this man guilty of the charges you have brought against him, 15 nor did Herod, for he sent him back to us. So no capital crime has been committed by him. 16 Therefore I shall have him flogged and then release him." 17 18 But all together they shouted out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us." 19 (Now Barabbas had been imprisoned for a rebellion that had taken place in the city and for murder.) 20 Again Pilate addressed them, still wishing to release Jesus, 21 but they continued their shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" 22 Pilate addressed them a third time, "What evil has this man done? I found him guilty of no capital crime. Therefore I shall have him flogged and then release him." 23 With loud shouts, however, they persisted in calling for his crucifixion, and their voices prevailed. 24 The verdict of Pilate was that their demand should be granted. 25 So he released the man who had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder, for whom they asked, and he handed Jesus over to them to deal with as they wished.

26 As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus. 27 A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. 28 Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children, 29 for indeed, the days are coming when people will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed.' 30 At that time people will say to the mountains, 'Fall upon us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' 31 for if these things are done when the wood is green what will happen when it is dry?" 32 Now two others, both criminals, were led away with him to be executed. 33 When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. 34 (Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.") They divided his garments by casting lots. 35 The people stood by and watched; the rulers, meanwhile, sneered at him and said, "He saved others, let him save himself if he is the chosen one, the Messiah of God." 36 Even the soldiers jeered at him. As they approached to offer him wine 37 they called out, "If you are King of the Jews, save yourself." 38 Above him there was an inscription that read, "This is the King of the Jews." 39 Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us." 40 The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? 41 And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." 42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." 43 He replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

44 It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon 45 because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. 46 Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"; and when he had said this he breathed his last. 47 The centurion who witnessed what had happened glorified God and said, "This man was innocent beyond doubt." 48 When all the people who had gathered for this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their breasts; 49 but all his acquaintances stood at a distance, including the women who had followed him from Galilee and saw these events. 50 Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph who, though he was a member of the council, 51 had not consented to their plan of

action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea and was awaiting the kingdom of God. 52 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 After he had taken the body down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb in which no one had yet been buried. 54 It was the day of preparation, and the sabbath was about to begin. 55 The women who had come from Galilee with him followed behind, and when they had seen the tomb and the way in which his body was laid in it, 56 they returned and prepared spices and perfumed oils. Then they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

BACKGROUND:

Luke presents a consistent image of Jesus. The qualities that Jesus has exhibited throughout his life are the same qualities with which Jesus moves toward his death. In the second verse of the text, Jesus tells those who have gathered for this last meal together that he has eagerly desired to eat this meal with them. But this is no ideal image of the final banquet. In the course of the meal those gathered argue about who is the greatest, and Peter's denial is predicted. From the beginning, Luke portrays Jesus as one who accepts the human imperfections and weaknesses of even his closest followers. On the Mount of Olives, Luke portrays Jesus as one who briefly wrestles with what lies before him, but quickly accepts the will of his Father. Jesus' closest disciples are unable to endure in faith, and they betray him. Their behavior indicates that they have not internalized Jesus' preaching and, as predicted, Peter denies his relationship with Jesus.

The one who will judge heaven and earth is led before the high priest, the Sanhedrin, Pilate, and Herod. Jesus does not challenge their authority. They bring charges against him that include being a revolutionary, forbidding the paying of taxes to Caesar, claiming to be king, and claiming to be the Christ and the Son of God. In the process of being questioned about these charges, he is also ridiculed, mocked, beaten, and flogged three different times. The crowds that greeted him and praised God as he entered Jerusalem now turn to anger and condemnation. Throughout, Jesus conducts himself with a sense of dignity and control. As he is being led to his crucifixion, Jesus ministers to women of Jerusalem and to one of the men being crucified with him.

When Jesus finally hands over his spirit to his Father, the centurion who witnessed what has happened declares, "This man was innocent beyond doubt." (Luke 23:47) Throughout his narrative, Luke reminds his audience of Jesus' innocence. Three times Pilate states that he does not find Jesus guilty of the charges. "Pilate then addressed the chief priests and the crowds, 'I find this man not guilty.' ... Pilate then summoned the chief priests, the rulers, and the people and said to them, 'you brought this man to me and accused him of inciting the people to revolt. I have conducted my investigation in your presence and have not found this man guilty of the charges you have brought against him, nor did Herod, for he sent him back to us. So no capital crime has been committed by him.' ... Pilate addressed them a third time, 'what evil has this man done? I found him guilty of no capital crime...' (Luke 23:4, 13-15, 22) One of those crucified with Jesus says to his companion, "we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal." (Luke 23:41) Jesus' prayer to His Father, that those who are crucifying Him be forgiven, is also a testament of Jesus' innocence. (Luke 23:34) These reminders throughout the passion lead the reader to feel the truth of the centurion's statement as Jesus gives up his life and darkness comes over the land. "This man was innocent beyond doubt." (Luke 23:47b)

The modern reader may be repulsed at the notion that Jesus is accepting the will of his Father. However, in the culture of the day, when Jesus lived and when the gospels were being written, an essential role of a Father was to discipline his son so that he would be able to deal with the hard life ahead as protector and provider of the family in a harsh and cruel environment and society. The discipline a father inflicted on his sons was both physical and social. The gospels reflect the value of the culture in which they were written. In that culture, Jesus endures the harshest discipline imaginable and remains faithful to his Father, to his disciples, to his tradition, and to his mission. He is a faithful son of God.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. When you think of your experience of being parented...
2. What were some of the most difficult periods in your life? How do they affect you today?
3. Luke presents Jesus as an innocent victim. The disciples, religious and civil authorities, and the crowd all stand by and watch the innocent Jesus suffer tragically and be put to death. In Luke's description, envision yourself actually

being there among the crowd that is watching these events unfold from a distance. Where do you find yourself? What are you doing? Who do you speak with? What is going on within you as you watch these events?

4. What happens within you when you hear Jesus say, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer"?
5. What happens within you when you hear Peter repeatedly deny Jesus? "Woman, I do not know him." "My friend, I do not know what you are talking about."
6. Finally, what happens within you as you hear Jesus say, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit?"
7. Can you take some time to talk with God openly and honestly about your experience of praying with this gospel?

The gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to anneamarie.lom@gmail.com

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Excerpts from the readings for April 14, 2019, Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

At The Procession With Palms

Jesus proceeded on his journey up to Jerusalem. As he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples. He said, "Go into the village opposite you, and as you enter it you will find a colt tethered. Untie it and bring it here. And if anyone should ask you, 'Why are you untying it?' you will answer, 'The Master has need of it.'" So those who had been sent went off and found everything just as he had told them. So they brought the colt to Jesus, threw their cloaks over it, and helped Jesus to mount. As he rode along, the people were spreading their cloaks on the road; the multitude of his disciples began to praise God aloud with joy for all the mighty deeds they had seen. They proclaimed: "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest." Some Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He said in reply, "I tell you, if they keep silent, the stones will cry out!"

At The Mass —

The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back. I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting. The Lord God is my help, I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

All who see me scoff at me; they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:

"He relied on the Lord; let him deliver him, let him rescue him, if he loves him."

Indeed, many dogs surround me, a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;

They have pierced my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones.

They divide my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots.

But you, O Lord, be not far from me; O my help, hasten to aid me.

I will proclaim your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:

"You who fear the Lord, praise him; give glory to him; revere him, all you descendants of Israel!"

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness;

he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Excerpts from Luke 19:28-40; Isaiah 50:4-7; Psalm 22:8-9, 17-24; and Philippians 2:6-11

(See excerpts from the passion Gospel on the next three pages)

Gospel—the Passion

When the hour came, Jesus took his place at table with the apostles.

He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it again until there is fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves;

for I tell you that from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine

until the kingdom of God comes." Then he took the bread, said the blessing,

broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which will be given for you;

do this in memory of me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying,

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which will be shed for you.

"And yet behold, the hand of the one who is to betray me is with me on the table; for the Son of Man indeed goes as it has been determined; but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed."

And they began to debate among themselves who among them would do such a deed.

Then an argument broke out among them about which of them should be regarded as the greatest.

He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them

and those in authority over them are addressed as 'Benefactors'; but among you it shall not be so.

Rather, let the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant.

For who is greater: the one seated at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one seated at table?

I am among you as the one who serves. It is you who have stood by me in my trials;

and I confer a kingdom on you, just as my Father has conferred one on me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

"Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers."

He said to him, "Lord, I am prepared to go to prison and to die with you." But he replied,

"I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows this day, you will deny three times that you know me."

He said to them, "When I sent you forth without a money bag or a sack or sandals, were you in need of anything?" "No, nothing," they replied. He said to them, "But now one who has a money bag should take it, and likewise a sack, and one who does not have a sword should sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me, namely, He was counted among the wicked; and indeed what is written about me is coming to fulfillment." Then they said, "Lord, look, there are two swords here." But he replied, "It is enough!"

Then going out, he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place he said to them, "Pray that you may not undergo the test." After withdrawing about a stone's throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground. When he rose from prayer and returned to his disciples, he found them sleeping from grief. He said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not undergo the test." While he was still speaking, a crowd approached and in front was one of the Twelve, Judas. He went up to Jesus to kiss him. Jesus said, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" His disciples realized what was about to happen, and they asked, "Lord, shall we strike with a sword?" And one of them struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said in reply, "Stop, no more of this!" Then he touched the servant's ear and healed him. And Jesus said to the chief priests and temple guards and elders who had come for him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? Day after day I was with you in the temple area, and you did not seize me; but this is your hour, the time for the power of darkness." After arresting him they led him away and took him to the house of the high priest; Peter was following at a distance. They lit a fire in the courtyard and sat around it, and Peter sat down with them. When a maid saw him seated in the light, she looked intently at him and said, "This man too was with him." But he denied it saying, "Woman, I do not know him." A short while later someone else saw him and said, "You too are one of them"; but Peter answered, "My friend, I am not." About an hour later, still another insisted, "Assuredly, this man too was with him, for he also is a Galilean." But Peter said, "My friend, I do not know what you are talking about." Just as he was saying this, the cock crowed, and the Lord turned and looked at Peter; and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." He went out and began to weep bitterly. The men who held Jesus were ridiculing and beating him. They blindfolded him and asked him, saying, "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" And they reviled him in saying many other things against him.

When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. They said, "If you are the Christ, tell us," but he replied to them, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question, you will not respond. But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God." They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?" He replied to them, "You say that I am." They said, "What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth." Then the whole assembly of them arose and brought him before Pilate. They brought charges against him, saying, "We found this man misleading our people; he opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar and maintains that he is the Christ, a king." Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." Pilate then addressed the chief priests and the crowds, "I find this man not guilty." But they were adamant and said, "He is inciting the people with his teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to here." On hearing this Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean; and upon learning that he

was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod who was in Jerusalem at that time. Herod was very glad to see Jesus; he had been wanting to see him for a long time, for he had heard about him and had been hoping to see him perform some sign. He questioned him at length, but he gave him no answer. The chief priests and scribes, meanwhile, stood by accusing him harshly. Herod and his soldiers treated him contemptuously and mocked him, and after clothing him in resplendent garb, he sent him back to Pilate. Herod and Pilate became friends that very day, even though they had been enemies formerly. Pilate then summoned the chief priests, the rulers, and the people and said to them, "You brought this man to me and accused him of inciting the people to revolt. I have conducted my investigation in your presence and have not found this man guilty of the charges you have brought against him, nor did Herod, for he sent him back to us. So no capital crime has been committed by him. I shall have him flogged and then release him."

But all together they shouted out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us." —Now Barabbas had been imprisoned for a rebellion that had taken place in the city and for murder.— Again Pilate addressed them, still wishing to release Jesus, but they continued their shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate addressed them a third time, "What evil has this man done? I found him guilty of no capital crime. Therefore I shall have him flogged and then release him." With loud shouts, however, they persisted in calling for his crucifixion, and their voices prevailed. The verdict of Pilate was that their demand should be granted. So he released Barabbas, for whom they asked, and he handed Jesus over to them to deal with as they wished.

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The women who had come from Galilee with him followed behind, and when they had seen the tomb and the way in which his body was laid in it, they returned and prepared spices and perfumed oils. Then they rested on the sabbath according to the commandment.

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