

1. THE SOLEMN ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. Hosanna in the highest.

ANTIPHON 2 DURING PROCESSION

The children of the Hebrews spread their garments on the road, crying out and saying: Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

2. THE SIMPLE ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

Six days before the Passover, when the Lord came into the city of Jerusalem, the children ran to meet him; in their hands they carried palm branches and with a loud voice cried out: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed are you, who have come in your abundant mercy!

O gates, lift high your heads; grow higher, ancient doors. Let him enter, the king of glory! Who is this king of glory? He, the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed are you, who have come in your abundant mercy!

COLLECT

Almighty ever-living God, who as an example of humility for the human race to follow caused our Saviour to take flesh and submit to the Cross, graciously grant that we may heed his lesson of patient suffering and so merit a share in his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING Is 50:4-7

A reading from the prophet Isaiah. The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue. So that I may know how to reply to the wearied, he provides me with speech. Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple. The Lord has opened my ear. For my part, I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard; I did not cover my face against insult and spittle. The Lord comes to my help, so that I am untouched by the insults. So, too, I set my face like flint; I know I shall not be shamed.

The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

PSALM Ps 21 (22):8-9, 17-20, 23-24

Response:

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

- All who see me deride me. They curl their lips, they toss their heads. "He trusted in the Lord, let him save him; let him release him if this is his friend." (R.)
- Many dogs have surrounded me, a band of the wicked beset me. They tear holes in my hands and my feet. I can count every one of my bones. (R.)
- They divide my clothing among them. They cast lots for my robe. O Lord, do not leave me alone, my strength, make haste to help me! (R.)
- I will tell of your name to my brethren and praise you where they are assembled. "You who fear the Lord give him praise; all sons of Jacob, give him glory. Revere him, Israel's sons." (R.)

SECOND READING Phil 2:6-11

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians.

His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are, and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory! Christ was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all names. Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory!

GOSPEL Mt 26:14 - 27:66 (Shorter Form Mt 27:11-54)

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;

through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Through the Passion of your Only Begotten Son, O Lord, may our reconciliation with you be near at hand, so that, though we do not merit it by our own deeds, yet by this sacrifice made once for all, we may feel already the effects of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Father, if this chalice cannot pass without my drinking it, your will be done.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourished with these sacred gifts, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, just as through the death of your Son you have brought us to hope for what we believe, so by his Resurrection you may lead us to where you call. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE PEOPLE

Look, we pray, O Lord, on this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ did not hesitate to be delivered into the hands of the wicked and submit to the agony of the Cross. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Unless we look at a person and see the beauty that is in them, we can contribute nothing to them. One does not help a person by discerning what is wrong, what is ugly, what is distorted. Christ looked at everyone he met, at the prostitute, at the thief, and saw the beauty hidden there. Perhaps it was distorted, perhaps damaged, but it was beauty none the less, and what he did was to call out this beauty.

Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

Sunday Message

PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

THE WORD

Year A • 29 March 2026 • Colour: Red • Psalter Week 2

THE TRIUMPH OF GOOD

MATTHEW 26:14-27:66

**SAY**

"Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set me free. You are the saviour of the world."

LEARN

The passion and death of Christ is proof of God's love for us

Jesus ended up on a cross because of the kind of life he lived. It's how we are called to live

Jesus didn't die for a nebulous mass called humanity. He died for each one of us individually

PRAY

Pray for those who have suffered because of their commitment to justice, truth and love. Thank God for them.

DO

There are many ways you can return to Matthew's account of the Passion this week. Reading it meditatively and unhurriedly might be the best way to do it. Or you might ask yourself how you would have performed if you had been one of the characters in the crucifixion drama. It will be pretty easy to see yourself as one of the good characters such as Pilate's wife or the centurion. But how would you rate as a Peter? A Judas? A high priest? Where would you have stood on that fateful day when Jesus was tried and crucified? Where do you stand today?

Today we listen to one of the great passion narratives. In the course of the passion, Jesus confronts all manner of sin - betrayal, desertion, violence, lies, abuse of power, cruelty. And he takes away this sin precisely by his obedience and his love. It is the triumph of love over evil.

In his book *Let Us Dream*, Pope Francis writes about good and bad spirits. The battle between the voices of good and evil is real, he says. Opinion writers and the sophisticated may be inclined to sneer at these old fashioned concepts, but the forces of darkness are genuine and powerful. We need only look at the genocide in Gaza and the war in Ukraine for proof of evil at work.

Think of those who suffer violence at the hands of a partner, or the exploitation of migrants by greedy people traffickers, or drug barons whose lives of luxury are built on the broken lives of those on whom they push drugs, or racists stoking hate online and on the streets. Think of how women and minority groups continue to be discriminated against in many places throughout the world. Evil is happening. Evil exists. Evil is a thing. Holy Week is an annual reminder that the forces of darkness are still very strong, and that for countless people every day is a long Good Friday.

Evil exists but so also does good. And so much good is being done; a superabundance of goodness has been poured out in response to the suffering in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan and elsewhere. Think of the way people help a family member or neighbour in distress, or care for a loved one broken by illness or old age, or put themselves out in the cause of justice and right.

The wonderful truth about this week is that we Christians journey through it knowing that good and light and hope have triumphed over evil and darkness and despair, and we are people of goodness and light and hope.

Whenever people of faith decide to confront evil at its source, and do so with inner freedom, Jesus is once more entering Jerusalem, says theologian Michel de Verteuil. We stand in solidarity with all who suffer. ■

REFLECT

One of my favourite pieces of music is the Triumphant March in Giuseppe Verdi's 1871 opera, *Aida*, where Radames leads the Egyptian army on its return following their victory over the Ethiopians. The elaborate parade, featuring soldiers and dancers, is noted for its powerful orchestration and its use of brass instruments, especially trumpets. It's no surprise its association with victory makes this piece of classical music a popular choice for sporting events, graduation ceremonies and national celebrations throughout the world.

It's hard to imagine a greater contrast between Verdi's Triumphant March and Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Passion (Palm) Sunday. The crowds cheer Jesus as they do Radames, but there are no trumpets and marching bands to lead Jesus into

the city, no ostentatious display of wealth, grandeur or power.

Instead, Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey. In choosing this most humble form of transport, Jesus is making a deliberate statement. He is identifying with the poor, the lowly, the abject outcast. He is standing alongside the suffering and forgotten. He is challenging the religious and political authorities who lord it over people. It has been the consistent message of Jesus' public ministry. He chose the sick over the healthy, the weak over the powerful, the poor over the rich, sinners over the pious. He washed feet. He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. It was a radical reversal of the world's way of seeing things.

We don't need to be news junkies to know that we live in a cut-throat, grotesquely

unequal world; a Darwinian jungle that champions rugged individualism, survival of the fittest, vaulting ambition; a 'me first' battlefield with little room for idealism, solidarity or tenderness. To get on in life, one must be aggressive, uncompromising, driven. To be successful, one must be selfish, arrogant, ruthless.

Humility is the opposite of 'me first.' It's the ability to stand in another's shoes; to consider experiences that are not our own, to revolve our actions around others rather than ourselves. It is being least, being servant, being little, being grateful. Christian ambition is the opposite of worldly ambition.

We don't have to sell our car and buy a donkey to follow the example of Jesus. We just need to put God and our neighbour before narrow self-interest. ■