

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 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.

GOSPEL

(Mt 21:1-11)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

When they were near Jerusalem and had come in sight of Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village facing you, and you will immediately find a tethered donkey and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you are to say, "The Master needs them and will send them back directly."' "

This took place to fulfil the prophecy:

Say to the daughter of Zion:

Look, your king comes to you;

he is humble, he rides on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.

So the disciples went out and did as Jesus had told them. They brought the donkey and the colt, then they laid their cloaks on their backs and he sat on them. Great crowds of people spread their cloaks on the road, while others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in his path. The crowds who went in front of him and those who followed were all shouting:

'Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heavens!'

And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil. 'Who is this?' people asked, and the crowds answered, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

2. THE SIMPLE ENTRANCE

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, one 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 ashamed.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESP. PSALM

Psalms 21

Response:

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

1. 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.)
2. 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.)
3. 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.)
4. 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

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
(all bow during the next two lines)
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
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.

FOR PALM SUNDAY

Soul of Christ, make me holy,
Body of Christ, save me,
Blood of Christ, inebriate me,
Water from the side of Christ, wash me,
Passion of Christ, strengthen me,
Good Jesus, hear me,
Within your wounds hide me,
Never let me be separated from you,
From the evil enemy defend me,
At the hour of my death call me,
And tell me to come to You,
That with your saints I may praise you for all eternity. Amen
(Traditional Prayer Anima Christi)



JESUS GIVES HIS LIFE FOR US

(MATTHEW 26:14-27:66)

The mob is notoriously fickle. At the beginning of Jesus' final visit to Jerusalem, its members were cheering Jesus as he entered the city: a few days later, they are baying for his blood. We talk about the mood of a crowd turning ugly, and there is no better example of this than the change in attitude towards Jesus.

Matthew's account of Jesus' suffering and death is one of his being abandoned. It is a bleak picture which begins with Judas striking a deal with the chief priests, and this sets the tone for what will follow. The mention of sharing the dish, a sign of great personal intimacy, only heightens the atmosphere of tragedy and betrayal. Jesus then struggles in Gethsemane with his destiny while his companions leave him alone, first of all by sleeping, then by running away when he is arrested. The members of the Sanhedrin stage a rigged trial, during which Peter claims that he does not even know Jesus. Judas is overcome with shame and remorse and commits suicide. The Roman governor, Pilate, tries to reason with the inflamed crowd then (literally) washes his hands of responsibility and orders the execution of the innocent Jesus out of political expediency, to prevent a riot breaking out. Jesus is insulted by the soldiers and those who see him on the cross, and the final abandonment is the worst: he upbraids God for deserting him in his hour of need. If we keep to the text as it is, without importing details from other writings in the scriptures, we are left with the distressing portrait of the Son of God whose dedication to the will of God has brought him to such a place. We should take his final words at their face value.

However, God has not abandoned Jesus. The Temple curtain is torn aside and Matthew reports an earthquake, the opening of the tombs and the rising of saintly members of the Jewish people. Jesus as birth was marked by the star in the sky, so his death is accompanied by apocalyptic events such as these. It is now, at the Cross, that Jesus can be truly proclaimed as the Son of God, as the Gentile Roman centurion and soldiers declare him. ■

REFLECT

One of the Gospel versions emphasise the physical sufferings of Jesus. The so-called Agony in the Garden is really The Struggle in Gethsemane, where Jesus again is tested as to whether he will be the true Son of God or not. Once again, he passes the test. The crown of thorns is an ironic symbol: the soldiers are consciously making fun of their prisoner, but in their sarcastic greeting, Hail King of the Jews!, they are actually getting it right. Devotions such as the traditional Stations of the Cross present us with the physical event: perhaps we might reflect more on what might have been going on in Jesus' mind, as the Gospel presents him. ■

SAY

"Truly this is the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54).

LEARN

Crucifixion was a means of execution by suffocation or asphyxiation: the person did not bleed to death.

The Gospel accounts of the passion do not highlight Jesus' physical suffering.

The women are present as witnesses at the key moments in the story of the passion: Jesus' death, burial and at the tomb on Easter morning.

The expression "to give up the ghost" comes from an older translation of Jesus' yielding up the spirit.

DO

Take your palm home. Spend a little time each day this Holy Week with it in your hand. Reflect on how it represents the self-giving of Jesus for our sake. Ask for the grace to be truly grateful.

