

Holy Week with Matthew (in the garden)

Palm Sunday



Matthew 21:

1-3 When they neared Jerusalem, having arrived at Bethphage on Mount Olives, Jesus sent two disciples with these instructions: “Go over to the village across from you. You’ll find a donkey tethered there, her colt with her. Untie her and bring them to me. If anyone asks what you’re doing, say, ‘The Master needs them!’ He will send them with you.”

4-5 This is the full story of what was sketched earlier by the prophet:

Tell Zion's daughter,
"Look, your king's on his way,
poised and ready, mounted
On a donkey, on a colt,
foal of a pack animal."

6-9 The disciples went and did exactly what Jesus told them to do. They led the donkey and colt out, laid some of their clothes on them, and Jesus mounted. Nearly all the people in the crowd threw their garments down on the road, giving him a royal welcome. Others cut branches from the trees and threw them down as a welcome mat. Crowds went ahead and crowds followed, all of them calling out, "Hosanna to David's son!" "Blessed is he who comes in God's name!" "Hosanna in highest heaven!"

10 As he made his entrance into Jerusalem, the whole city was shaken. Unnerved, people were asking, "What's going on here? Who is this?"

11 The parade crowd answered, "This is the prophet Jesus, the one from Nazareth in Galilee."

Prayer

True and humble king,
hailed by the crowd as Messiah:
grant us the faith to know you and love you,
that we may be found beside you
on the way of the cross,
which is the path of glory.
Amen.

Maundy Thursday - The Last Supper



Matthew 26:

¹⁷ On the first of the Days of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Where do you want us to prepare your Passover meal?”

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ He said, “Enter the city. Go up to a certain man and say, ‘The Teacher says, My time is near. I and my disciples

plan to celebrate the Passover meal at your house.’” The disciples followed Jesus’ instructions to the letter, and prepared the Passover meal.

²⁰⁻²¹ After sunset, he and the Twelve were sitting around the table. During the meal, he said, “I have something hard but important to say to you: One of you is going to hand me over to the conspirators.”

²² They were stunned, and then began to ask, one after another, “It isn’t me, is it, Master?”

²³⁻²⁴ Jesus answered, “The one who hands me over is someone I eat with daily, one who passes me food at the table. In one sense the Son of Man is entering into a way of treachery well-marked by the Scriptures—no surprises here. In another sense that man who turns him in, turns traitor to the Son of Man—better never to have been born than do this!”

²⁵ Then Judas, already turned traitor, said, “It isn’t me, is it, Rabbi?”

Jesus said, “Don’t play games with me, Judas.”

²⁶⁻²⁹ During the meal, Jesus took and blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples:

Take, eat. This is my body.

Taking the cup and thanking God, he gave it to them:

Drink this, all of you. This is my blood,
God’s new covenant poured out for many people
for the forgiveness of sins.

“I’ll not be drinking wine from this cup again until that new day when I’ll drink with you in the kingdom of my Father.”

Prayer

God our Father,
you have invited us to share in the supper
which your Son gave to his Church
to proclaim his death until he comes:
may he nourish us by his presence,
and unite us in his love;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Maundy Thursday - Gethsemane



Matthew 26:

³⁰ They sang a hymn and went directly to Mount Olives. ³¹⁻³² Then Jesus told them, “Before the night’s over, you’re going to fall to pieces because of what happens to me. There is a Scripture that says, I’ll strike the shepherd; helter-skelter the sheep will be scattered.

But after I am raised up, I, your Shepherd, will go ahead of you, leading the way to Galilee.” ³³ Peter broke in, “Even if everyone else falls to pieces on account of you, I won’t.” ³⁴ “Don’t be so sure,” Jesus said. “This very night, before the rooster crows up the dawn, you will deny me three times.” ³⁵ Peter protested, “Even if I had to die with you, I would never deny you.” All the others said the same thing. ³⁶⁻³⁸ Then Jesus went with them to a garden called Gethsemane and told his disciples, “Stay here while I go over there and pray.” Taking along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he plunged into an agonizing sorrow. Then he said, “This sorrow is crushing my life out. Stay here and keep vigil with me.”

³⁹ Going a little ahead, he fell on his face, praying, “My Father, if there is any way, get me out of this. But please, not what I want. You, what do *you* want?”

⁴⁰⁻⁴¹ When he came back to his disciples, he found them sound asleep. He said to Peter, “Can’t you stick it out with me a single hour? Stay alert; be in prayer so you don’t wander into temptation without even knowing you’re in danger. There is a part of you that is eager, ready for anything in God. But there’s another part that’s as lazy as an old dog sleeping by the fire.”

⁴² He then left them a second time. Again he prayed, “My Father, if there is no other way than this, drinking this cup to the dregs, I’m ready. Do it your way.”

⁴³⁻⁴⁴ When he came back, he again found them sound asleep. They simply couldn’t keep their eyes open. This time he let them sleep on, and went back a third time to pray, going over the same ground one last time.

⁴⁵⁻⁴⁶ When he came back the next time, he said, “Are you going to sleep on and make a night of it? My time is up, the Son of Man is about to be handed over to the hands of sinners. Get up! Let’s get going! My betrayer is here.”

⁴⁷⁻⁴⁹ The words were barely out of his mouth when Judas (the one from the Twelve) showed up, and with him a gang from the high priests and religious leaders brandishing swords and clubs. The betrayer had worked out a sign with them: “The one I kiss, that’s the one—seize him.” He went straight to Jesus, greeted him, “How are you, Rabbi?” and kissed him.

“Stay with me, remain here with me,
Watch and pray, watch and pray”.

Taize chant

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXiO2gbXvoA>

Peter in the courtyard



Matthew 26:
57-58 The gang that had seized Jesus led him before Caiaphas the Chief Priest, where the religion scholars and leaders had assembled. Peter followed at a safe distance until they got to the Chief Priest's courtyard. Then he slipped in and mingled with the servants, watching to see how things

would turn out. 59-60 The high priests, conspiring with the Jewish Council, tried to cook up charges against Jesus in order to sentence him to death. But even though many stepped up, making up one false accusation after another, nothing was believable.

60-61 Finally two men came forward with this: "He said, 'I can tear down this Temple of God and after three days rebuild it.'"

62 The Chief Priest stood up and said, "What do you have to say to the accusation?" 63 Jesus kept silent.

Then the Chief Priest said, "I command you by the authority of the living God to say if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

⁶⁴ Jesus was curt: “You yourself said it. And that’s not all. Soon you’ll see it for yourself:

The Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Mighty One,
Arriving on the clouds of heaven.”

⁶⁵⁻⁶⁶ At that, the Chief Priest lost his temper, ripping his robes, yelling, “He blasphemed! Why do we need witnesses to accuse him? You all heard him blaspheme! Are you going to stand for such blasphemy?”

They all said, “Death! That seals his death sentence.”

⁶⁷⁻⁶⁸ Then they were spitting in his face and banging him around. They jeered as they slapped him: “Prophecy, Messiah: Who hit you that time?”

⁶⁹ All this time, Peter was sitting out in the courtyard. One servant girl came up to him and said, “You were with Jesus the Galilean.”

⁷⁰ In front of everybody there, he denied it. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

⁷¹ As he moved over toward the gate, someone else said to the people there, “This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.”

⁷² Again he denied it, salting his denial with an oath: “I swear, I never laid eyes on the man.”

⁷³ Shortly after that, some bystanders approached Peter. “You’ve got to be one of them. Your accent gives you away.”

⁷⁴⁻⁷⁵ Then he got really nervous and swore. “I don’t know the man!” Just then a rooster crowed. Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.” He went out and cried and cried and cried.

Prayer

Redeeming God,
renew your broken people with your Holy Spirit,
that they may walk your narrow way,
and greet your coming dawn
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The judgement



Matthew 27:

1-2 In the first light of dawn, all the high priests and religious leaders met and put the finishing touches on their plot to kill Jesus. Then they tied him up and paraded him to Pilate, the governor.

11 Jesus was placed before the governor,

who questioned him: “Are you the ‘King of the Jews?’” Jesus said, “If you say so.”

12-14 But when the accusations rained down hot and heavy from the high priests and religious leaders, he said nothing. Pilate asked him, “Do you hear that long list of accusations? Aren’t you going to say something?” Jesus kept silence—not a word from his mouth. The governor was impressed, really impressed.

15-18 It was an old custom during the Feast for the governor to pardon a single prisoner named by the crowd. At the

time, they had the infamous Jesus Barabbas in prison. With the crowd before him, Pilate said, “Which prisoner do you want me to pardon: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus the so-called Christ?” He knew it was through sheer spite that they had turned Jesus over to him.

¹⁹ While court was still in session, Pilate’s wife sent him a message: “Don’t get mixed up in judging this noble man. I’ve just been through a long and troubled night because of a dream about him.”

²⁰ Meanwhile, the high priests and religious leaders had talked the crowd into asking for the pardon of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus.

²¹ The governor asked, “Which of the two do you want me to pardon?”

They said, “Barabbas!”

²² “Then what do I do with Jesus, the so-called Christ?”

They all shouted, “Nail him to a cross!”

²³ He objected, “But for what crime?”

But they yelled all the louder, “Nail him to a cross!”

²⁴ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and that a riot was imminent, he took a basin of water and washed his hands in full sight of the crowd, saying, “I’m washing my hands of responsibility for this man’s death. From now on, it’s in your hands. You’re judge and jury.”

²⁵ The crowd answered, “We’ll take the blame, we and our children after us.”

²⁶ Then he pardoned Barabbas. But he had Jesus whipped, and then handed over for crucifixion.

Prayer

Lord God, mighty king,
you love justice and establish equity;
may we love justice more than gain
and mercy more than power;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Crucifixion



Matthew 27:
27-31 The soldiers assigned to the governor took Jesus into the governor's palace and got the entire brigade together for some fun. They stripped him and dressed him in a red toga. They plaited a crown from branches of a thornbush and set it on his head. They put a stick in his right hand for a scepter. Then they knelt before him in

mocking reverence: "Bravo, King of the Jews!" they said. "Bravo!" Then they spit on him and hit him on the head with the stick. When they had had their fun, they took off the toga and put his own clothes back on him. Then they proceeded out to the crucifixion.

32-34 Along the way they came on a man from Cyrene named Simon and made him carry Jesus' cross. Arriving at Golgotha, the place they call "Skull Hill," they offered him a mild painkiller (a mixture of wine and myrrh), but when he tasted it he wouldn't drink it.

35-40 After they had finished nailing him to the cross and were waiting for him to die, they whiled away the time by throwing dice for his clothes. Above his head they had posted the criminal charge against him: this is jesus, the

king of the jews. Along with him, they also crucified two criminals, one to his right, the other to his left. People passing along the road jeered, shaking their heads in mock lament: “You bragged that you could tear down the Temple and then rebuild it in three days—so show us your stuff! Save yourself! If you’re really God’s Son, come down from that cross!”

⁴¹⁻⁴⁴ The high priests, along with the religion scholars and leaders, were right there mixing it up with the rest of them, having a great time poking fun at him: “He saved others—he can’t save himself! King of Israel, is he? Then let him get down from that cross. We’ll *all* become believers then! He was so sure of God—well, let him rescue his ‘Son’ now—if he wants him! He did claim to be God’s Son, didn’t he?” Even the two criminals crucified next to him joined in the mockery.

⁴⁵⁻⁴⁶ From noon to three, the whole earth was dark. Around midafternoon Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” which means, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”

⁴⁷⁻⁴⁹ Some bystanders who heard him said, “He’s calling for Elijah.” One of them ran and got a sponge soaked in sour wine and lifted it on a stick so he could drink. The others joked, “Don’t be in such a hurry. Let’s see if Elijah comes and saves him.”

⁵⁰ But Jesus, again crying out loudly, breathed his last.

⁵¹⁻⁵³ At that moment, the Temple curtain was ripped in two, top to bottom.

Eternal God,
in the cross of Jesus

we see the cost of our sin and the depth of your love:
in humble hope and fear, may we place at his feet
all that we have and all that we are,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Burial



Matthew 27:

⁵⁵⁻⁵⁶ There were also quite a few women watching from a distance, women who had followed Jesus from Galilee in order to serve him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the Zebedee brothers.

⁵⁷⁻⁶¹ Late in the afternoon a wealthy man from Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, arrived. His name was Joseph. He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate granted his request. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in clean linens, put it in his own tomb, a new tomb only recently cut into the rock, and rolled a large stone across the

entrance. Then he went off. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary stayed, sitting in plain view of the tomb.

⁶²⁻⁶⁴ After sundown, the high priests and Pharisees arranged a meeting with Pilate. They said, “Sir, we just remembered that that liar announced while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will be raised.’ We’ve got to get that tomb sealed until the third day. There’s a good chance his disciples will come and steal the corpse and then go around saying, ‘He’s risen from the dead.’ Then we’ll be worse off than before, the final deceit surpassing the first.”

⁶⁵⁻⁶⁶ Pilate told them, “You will have a guard. Go ahead and secure it the best you can.” So they went out and secured the tomb, sealing the stone and posting guards.

Prayer

In the depths of our isolation
we cry to you, Lord God:
give light in our darkness
and bring us out of the prison of our despair;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Empty Tomb



Matthew 28:
1-4 After the Sabbath, as the first light of the new week dawned, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to keep vigil at the tomb. Suddenly the earth reeled and rocked under their feet as God's angel came down from heaven,

came right up to where they were standing. He rolled back the stone and then sat on it. Shafts of lightning blazed from him. His garments shimmered snow-white. The guards at the tomb were scared to death. They were so frightened, they couldn't move.

⁵⁻⁶ The angel spoke to the women: "There is nothing to fear here. I know you're looking for Jesus, the One they

nailed to the cross. He is not here. He was raised, just as he said. Come and look at the place where he was placed.

⁷ “Now, get on your way quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He is risen from the dead. He is going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.’ That’s the message.”

⁸⁻¹⁰ The women, deep in wonder and full of joy, lost no time in leaving the tomb. They ran to tell the disciples. Then Jesus met them, stopping them in their tracks. “Good morning!” he said. They fell to their knees, embraced his feet, and worshiped him. Jesus said, “You’re holding on to me for dear life! Don’t be frightened like that. Go tell my brothers that they are to go to Galilee, and that I’ll meet them there.”

Prayer

God of glory,

by the raising of your Son

you have broken the chains of death and hell:

fill your Church with faith and hope;

for a new day has dawned

and the way to life stands open

in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

Audrey Elkington April 2020

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