

Reading for Good Friday

April 3rd 2026

There is no Mass today. The readings given here are used in the afternoon celebration of the Lord's Passion.

First reading

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

'He was pierced for our transgressions.'

Behold, my servant shall act wisely;

he shall be high and lifted up, and shall be exalted.

As many were astonished at him —

his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,

and his form beyond that of the children of mankind —

so shall he sprinkle many nations.

Kings shall shut their mouths because of him, for that which has not been told them they see,

and that which they have not heard they understand.

Who has believed what he has heard from us?

And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground;

he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,

and no beauty that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;

and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken,

smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned — every one — to his own way;

and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth;

like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,

and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

By oppression and judgement he was taken away;

and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living,

stricken for the transgression of my people?

And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death,

although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief;

when his soul makes an offering for guilt,

he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days;

the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;

by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,

make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many,

and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death

and was numbered with the transgressors;

yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 31(30):2, 6. 12a-d. 12e-13. 15-16. 17, 25. R Luke 23:46

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

In you, O Lord, I take refuge.

Let me never be put to shame.

In your justice, set me free.

Into your hands I commend my spirit.

You will redeem me, O Lord, O faithful God.

Because of all my foes I have become a reproach,
an object of scorn to my neighbours and of fear to my friends.

Those who see me in the street, they flee from me.

I am forgotten, like someone dead, and have become like a broken vessel.

But as for me, I trust in you, O Lord;

I say, 'You are my God.

There in your hands is my lot, from the hands of my enemies deliver me
and from those who pursue me.'

'Let your face shine on your servant. Save me in your merciful love.'

Be strong, let your heart take courage, all who hope in the Lord.

Second reading

Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

'He learned obedience and became the source of salvation to all who obey him.'

Brothers and Sisters: Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him.

Gospel Acclamation

Philippians 2:8-9

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Christ became for us obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.

Therefore God has highly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

John 18:1-19:42

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Key: N. Narrator. ✕ Christ. S. Speaker or speakers other than Christ.

N. At that time: Jesus went out with his disciples across the brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. So Judas, having procured a band of soldiers and some officers from the

chief priests and the Pharisees, went there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them,

✘ Whom do you seek?

N. They answered him,

S. Jesus of Nazareth.

N. Jesus said to them,

✘ I am he.

N. Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, 'I am he', they drew back and fell to the ground. So he asked them again,

✘ Whom do you seek?

N. And they said,

S. Jesus of Nazareth.

N. Jesus answered,

✘ I told you that I am he. So, if you seek me, let these men go.

N. This was to fulfil the word that he had spoken: 'Of those whom you gave me I have lost not one.' Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter,

✘ Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?

N. So the band of soldiers and their captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him. First they led him to Annas, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, but Peter stood outside at the door. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the servant girl who kept watch at the door, and brought Peter in. The servant girl at the door said to Peter,

S. You also are not one of this man's disciples, are you?

N. He said,

S. I am not.

N. Now the servants and officers had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and they were standing and warming themselves. Peter also was with them, standing and warming himself.

The high priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him,

✘ I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together. I have said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me what I said to them; they know what I said.

N. When he had said these things, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying,

S. Is that how you answer the high priest?

N. Jesus answered him,

✘ If what I said is wrong, bear witness about the wrong; but if what I said is right, why do you strike me?

N. Annas then sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him,

S. You also are not one of his disciples, are you?

N. He denied it and said,

S. I am not.

N. One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked,

S. Did I not see you in the garden with him?

N. Peter again denied it, and at once a cock crowed.

Then they led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the governor's headquarters. It was early morning. They themselves did not enter the governor's headquarters, so that they would not be defiled, but could eat the Passover. So Pilate went outside to them and said,

S. What accusation do you bring against this man?

N. They answered him,

S. If this man were not doing evil, we would not have delivered him over to you.

N. Pilate said to them,

S. Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.

N. The Jews said to him,

S. It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death.

N. This was to fulfil the word that Jesus had spoken to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

So Pilate entered his headquarters again and called Jesus and said to him,

S. Are you the King of the Jews?

N. Jesus answered,

✘ Do you say this of your own accord, or did others say it to you about me?

N. Pilate answered,

S. Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you up to me. What have you done?

N. Jesus answered,

✘ My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.

N. Then Pilate said to him,

S. So you are a king?

N. Jesus answered,

✘ You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world — to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.

N. Pilate said to him,

S. What is truth?

N. After he had said this, he went back outside to the Jews and told them,

S. I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I should release one man for you at the Passover. So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?

N. They cried out again,

S. Not this man, but Barabbas!

N. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe. They came up to him, saying,

S. Hail, King of the Jews!

N. and struck him with their hands. Pilate went out again and said to them,

S. See, I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in him.

N. So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them,

S. Behold the man!

N. When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out,

S. Crucify him, crucify him!

N. Pilate said to them,

S. Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no guilt in him.

N. The Jews answered him,

S. We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.

N. When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus,

S. Where are you from?

N. But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to him,

S. You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?

N. Jesus answered him,

✠ You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above. Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.

N. From then on Pilate sought to release him, but the Jews cried out,

S. If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.

N. So when Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judgement seat at a place called The Stone Pavement, and in Aramaic Gabbatha. Now it was the day of Preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews,

S. Behold your King!

N. They cried out,

S. Away with him, away with him, crucify him!

N. Pilate said to them,

S. Shall I crucify your King?

N. The chief priests answered,

S. We have no king but Caesar.

N. So he delivered him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of the Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.' Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate,

S. Do not write, 'The King of the Jews', but rather, 'This man said, I am King of the Jews.'

N. Pilate answered,

S. What I have written I have written.

N. When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier; also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, so they said to one another,

S. Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.

N. This was to fulfil the Scripture which says, 'They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.' So the soldiers did these things, but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother,

✠ Woman, behold, your son!

N. Then he said to the disciple,

✠ Behold, your mother!

N. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfil the Scripture),

✠ I thirst.

N. A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said,

✠ It is finished,

N. and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

All kneel for a period of silence.

N. Since it was the day of Preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness — his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth — that you also may believe. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: 'Not

one of his bones will be broken.’ And again another Scripture says, ‘They will look on him whom they have pierced.’

After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about thirty-five kilograms in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Short reflection on the reading for today

Calvary sets in consoling relief the experience of all who suffer, whether the nightmare of physical pain or the emotional trauma of significant loss or the prospect of imminent death. The human Jesus, struggling to come to terms with the reality of his predicament, echoes every human experience of suffering and of loss and reflects the complexity and confusion of emotions that attend all those caught in the slipstream of pain and loss and death.

This Friday, in homes and in hospitals those who experience pain and desolation in whatever form, all those who like Mary stand at the foot of the cross, will sense something of the complexity of emotions that were present on Calvary: the same confusion, the same disillusionment, the same desolation, the same anger, the same reproach. How many indeed this Friday will, in whatever shape or form, echo the great lamentation of Jesus as he died on the cross: My God, what have you done to me, answer me?

All who are suffering in whatever form this Good Friday, all who struggle to make sense of what, by any human estimate, seems to be senseless will find an echo of their pain in the sufferings of Jesus because the contradiction of the cross is that what it represents, the sufferings of Christ, continues to save and to heal and to comfort.

Contemplating Jesus on the cross brings comfort and resilience and strength to those who need it. And it reminds us that it is through his suffering that everyone and everything is redeemed, that the power and the presence and promise of God are now accessible to us in our suffering and in our need.

Contemplating Jesus on the Cross reminds us that in our present frail and redeemed bodies we carry the saving power of God. Kiss the cross on Good Friday, not for God’s sake but for your own.