

## April 14th, 2019, Year C: Palm Sunday

### Isaiah 50:4-7

*This is the third poem or song of the suffering servant.<sup>1</sup> This figure at times seems to represent the whole people of Israel, suffering in exile in Babylon, but at other times seems to be an individual servant of God. Maybe it was both.<sup>5</sup> The ministry and life of Isaiah are a prefigurement of Jesus Christ.<sup>4</sup>*

**4The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue,** God is the source of his well-trained tongue. Isaiah is considered one of the greatest masters of the Hebrew language.<sup>4</sup> **that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them.** The Servant must first be a disciple, prayerfully receiving God's word, before he can presume to teach others.<sup>1</sup> **Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear;** The preacher must first be a hearer of God's word.<sup>3</sup>

**5and I have not rebelled, have not turned back.** This is in contrast to his generation in Israel who had both rebelled and turned away from God. Isaiah was faithful and for this faithfulness he suffered.<sup>4</sup> He was probably tempted to turn away for the task of preaching got him little more than abuse.<sup>3</sup> However, he obediently listens to God's Word and yearns to speak it to others.<sup>1</sup>

**6I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;** This was a sign of dishonor to the Jews.<sup>4</sup> **my face I did not shield** He accepted his suffering freely and nobly.<sup>4</sup> **from buffets and spitting.** His face was slapped and spat upon.

**7The Lord God is my help,** God's help was the reason for his endurance. And because he is in God's hands, he is sure that he will not be put to shame.<sup>2</sup> **therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame.** Despite the rejection he experiences, his faith sustains him with the strength of flint.<sup>3</sup>

### Philippians 2:6-11

*This was a hymn of the early Church and Paul cites it as an example for the community because of the emphasis of selflessness and humility which ultimately meant death itself. These are precisely the matters he has been instructing the Philippians about.<sup>6</sup>*

**6Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,** This takes note that Jesus Christ is God and that he existed from all eternity.<sup>5</sup> **did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.** This can also be translated as "taken advantage of." This means that the attitude of Christ was that of not taking advantage of his great powers and privileges as God. Instead, Jesus accepts the humble condition of a slave. Thus his attitude is one of selfless surrender and great generosity.<sup>4</sup> There is a contrast here between Jesus and Adam who was made in the likeness of God but who gave into the temptation to grasp at equality with God. Rejecting Adam's sin, Jesus freely emptied himself from his exalted position and took on Adam's condition of slavery to sin and corruption. He accepted the form of a slave.<sup>5</sup>

**7Rather, he emptied himself,** Jesus could not stop being God and he had a right to be treated as God and to appear in all his glory like he did at the Transfiguration, but, instead, he chose to be like men in all things but sin.<sup>5</sup> **taking the form of a slave,** This is meant to inspire us to be servants of one another.<sup>6</sup> This refers to the condition of a slave in contrast to being the "Lord."<sup>1</sup> **coming in human likeness;** He looked like a man.<sup>1</sup> and found human in appearance, This points to the humiliation of the Incarnation. Jesus, in becoming man, gave up the privilege of divine glory. He

did not empty himself of divinity, but of the status of glory to which he had a right and which would be restored at his exaltation.<sup>1</sup>

**8**he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. St. John Chrysostom explains that debasing oneself when one is forced to do so is not humility, but humility is present when one debases oneself without being obliged to do so.<sup>5</sup> Crucifixion was the ultimate indignity for it was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists.<sup>6</sup>

**9**Because of this, This is the point where this passage pivots from the first three verses that tell us what Jesus did and the last three verses that tell us what God the Father did for him.<sup>2</sup> **God greatly exalted him** Exultation is the public manifestation of the glory which belongs to Christ's humanity.<sup>5</sup> God raised him to the loftiest heights. This refers to the Ascension of Christ.<sup>1</sup> **and bestowed on him the name which is above every name,** For the Jews the "name that is above every name" is the name of God (Yahweh). This means that God the Father gave Christ's human nature the capacity to manifest the glory of divinity which was Christ's by virtue of his being both God and man.<sup>5</sup>

**10**that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, This act of religious devotion transfers to Jesus the adoration given in the OT to Yahweh.<sup>5</sup> **of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,** There is adoration by the whole universe. By including the underworld it is emphasizing that nothing escapes his dominion.<sup>5</sup>

**11**and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, The translation means that Jesus Christ is God.<sup>5</sup> **to the glory of God the Father.** For Jesus to occupy the heavenly throne constitutes no rivalry to the Father, rather, his voluntary abasement and the acknowledgement paid to him by creation bring

honor to the Father.<sup>1</sup> Written between 55 and 62, this is one of the earliest New Testament texts to reveal the divinity of Christ.<sup>5</sup>

### **Luke 22:14-23:56**

**14**When the hour came, Jesus took his place at table with the apostles. This refers to the Last Supper, where Jesus gathered with his apostles to transform the Old Covenant Passover into the sacrificial banquet of the New Covenant. As Passover recalls Israel's deliverance from Egypt, so the Eucharist both commemorates and accomplishes our redemption from slavery in sin. Jesus changes this ancient feast by placing himself at the center of its significance: he is the true Lamb offered for sin and given as food to God's family.<sup>8</sup>

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

**17**Then he took a cup, The Passover meal was structured around four cups of wine. Here Jesus takes the first or second cup; either he was sanctifying the feast (cup one) or he and the disciples had just finished singing Psalm 113-114 (cup 2). The Eucharistic cup that Jesus consecrates in 22:20 was probably cup three.<sup>8</sup> In John's Gospel it is clear that he did not drink the fourth cup until he was dying on the cross and thus ended the Old Covenant.(19:30) **gave thanks, and said, "Take this and share it among yourselves,**

**18**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."

**19**Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, The early Christians closely associated the Eucharist with this gesture, calling it the "breaking of the bread."<sup>8</sup> **and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body,** Once Jesus consecrates the unleavened bread, it is no longer a symbol of the Old

Covenant Passover, but the substance of the New Covenant Passover: CHRIST HIMSELF.<sup>8</sup> which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.” The apostles and their successors are to imitate Jesus’ actions. Note that only “the twelve” were present with him at the Last Supper. According to the Council of Trent in 1562, Jesus’ words “Do this in memory of me” are linked with the apostles’ ordination to the New Covenant priesthood.<sup>8</sup> Every Catholic bishop can trace the lineage of the Bishop who ordained him back to one of the apostles.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>20</sup>And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying “This cup is the new covenant This is the only place in the gospels where this expression is used.<sup>8</sup> in my blood, which will be shed for you. The words used here are part of the language of the OT where the blood of animal sacrifices was poured at the base of the altar to make atonement.<sup>8</sup> The Eucharist is the Sacrifice of the New Testament. We call it the Holy Mass. It completes and surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant.<sup>7</sup> (CCC 1330)

<sup>21</sup>And yet behold, the hand of the one who is to betray me is with me on the table; With this reference to Judas, Luke seems to be saying that even one’s presence at the Lord’s table is no guarantee of fidelity to Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>22</sup>for the Son of Man indeed goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed.” Even though it has been preordained that the Son of Man would suffer, woe to Judas who is going to betray him for he still bears personal responsibility.

<sup>23</sup>And they began to debate among themselves who among them would do such a deed.

<sup>24</sup>Then an argument broke out among them about which of them should be regarded as the greatest.

<sup>25</sup>He said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them and those in authority over them are addressed as ‘Benefactors;’ This is a title of honor claimed by various rulers of the Hellenistic world.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>26</sup>but among you it shall not be so. Rather, let the greatest among you be as the youngest, and the leader as the servant. The apostles must not confuse worldly honor and recognition with spiritual greatness. The shepherds of God’s people must instead imitate Christ in their humility and selfless concern for those under their care.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>27</sup>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.

<sup>28</sup>It is you who have stood by me in my trials;

<sup>29</sup>and I confer a kingdom on you, Jesus confers royal authority on the apostles and entrusts them with the Church on earth. Jesus alludes to the prophetic vision of Daniel 7 in which God gives a worldwide kingdom to the Son of man who in turn gives it to the saints. The historical unfolding of this prophecy begins with the Ascension of Jesus and the birth of the Church.<sup>8</sup> just as my Father has conferred one on me,

<sup>30</sup>that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom; and you will sit on thrones Seats of royal honor. As the new Davidic king, Jesus gives his apostles a share in his kingdom, enabling them to exercise his royal authority over God’s people. The role of the apostles is described in terms that recall how King David’s cabinet of ministers ruled Israel from thrones in Jerusalem.<sup>8</sup> judging the twelve tribes of Israel. These men will become the new patriarchs of the new Israel, the Christian community.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift all of you like wheat, Wheat is sifted by violent agitation. This means that God permitted this severe temptation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>32</sup>but I have prayed that your own faith may not fail; Note that Jesus did not pray that Peter would not deny him, but rather, that his faith would not fail. and once you have turned back, you must

strengthen your brothers.” Jesus displays a special interest in Peter both here and elsewhere. Although Satan will test the faith of all the disciples, Jesus prays for Simon in particular. In this way Christ helps Peter regain his balance after he stumbles, making him a source of stability for others.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>33</sup>He said to him, “Lord, I am prepared to go to prison and to die with you.”

<sup>34</sup>But he replied, “I tell you, Peter, before the cock crows this day, you will deny three times that you know me.”

<sup>35</sup>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.

<sup>36</sup>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. To sell the outer garment for a sword is symbolic for they are entering a state of testing with no external resources and great danger.<sup>16</sup> The disciples must be ready for any and every circumstance.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>37</sup>For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me, namely, ‘He was counted among the wicked;’ Jesus views his coming Passion through the lens of OT prophecy, in particular, the Suffering Servant figure from Isaiah which represents the rejected Messiah who is despised, wounded and struck down. He is even numbered among the sinners, yet he is innocent and offers himself as a sacrifice for the sins of others.<sup>8</sup> and indeed what is written about me is coming to fulfillment.

<sup>38</sup>Then they said, “Lord, look, there are two swords here.” But he replied, “It is enough!” This is an expression of frustration as the apostles didn’t get it. Although Jesus spoke of swords metaphorically in verse 36 to warn of the coming spiritual battle, some of the disciples took his words literally. Jesus will clarify his meaning in verses 49-51 when he rebukes Peter for violently defending him with a sword.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>39</sup>Then going out, he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, Every day Jesus taught in the temple and at night he went out and lodged on the Mount of Olives.<sup>16</sup> and the disciples followed him. The Agony In The Garden is the first sorrowful mystery of the rosary.

<sup>40</sup>When he arrived at the place The garden of Gethsemane is a grove that lies at the foot of the Mount of Olives.<sup>1</sup> he said to them, “Pray that you may not undergo the test.”

<sup>41</sup>After withdrawing about a stone’s throw from them and kneeling, This is the only time that the scriptures tell us that Jesus knelt, which is an external expression of a humble attitude towards God.<sup>14</sup> he prayed, saying,

<sup>42</sup>“Father, if you are willing, take this cup This is an image of bitter suffering.<sup>8</sup> On the Day of Atonement each year the High Priest sprinkled the blood of a goat on the throne of God as the price of the people’s crimes for the year. Then he would lay his hands on a live goat and confess those crimes over it, transferring the guilt to the innocent substitute. Then the scapegoat was driven into the desert. Jesus now began to live out what 1500 years of goats had symbolized.<sup>10</sup> away from me; still, not my will but yours be done.” Jesus never resists his appointed mission. The Father answers this prayer, not by removing the Passion, but by strengthening the Son to endure it. As a man Jesus recoils from the prospect of suffering. His anguish is intensified by his foresight, knowing that he will experience pain in his body and bear the dreadful weight of man’s sins on the Cross. Even so, Jesus is obedient unto death.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>43</sup>And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. This is the “Angel of the Agony.” In addition to aiding Jesus in his work as Redeemer, angels also minister to the Church in a special way. We often see them act in the early days of the Church. God has given angels the mission of

accompanying men and helping them as they make their way on earth towards their heavenly goal. The angels, says Paul VI, “intercede for us and come to the aid of our weakness in brotherly care.” Their caring presence should move us to rely constantly on our guardian angels, to have recourse to them in our needs and to show them reverence.<sup>14</sup>

**44**He was in such agony Jesus had the foreknowledge of his coming suffering, the weight of all of man’s sins, the unfaithfulness of the chosen people and the coming abandonment by his disciples.<sup>14</sup> and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground.

Although it is rare, bloody sweat may occur in people experiencing extreme emotion. This is called haematidrosis.<sup>17</sup>

**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?” Judas contorts a symbol of affection into one of betrayal. It was part of his prearranged plot to identify Jesus for the soldiers.<sup>8</sup>

**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. Simon Peter was the one and Jesus both reprimands him and rectifies his wrong.<sup>8</sup>

**51**But Jesus said in reply, “Stop, no more of this!” Then he touched the servant’s ear and healed him. This is the last recorded miracle of Jesus before his death.<sup>14</sup>

**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.” This was the appointed time of Satan’s final attack on Jesus.<sup>8</sup>

**54**After arresting him they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest; This was his official residence. Since the Jewish court normally convened in a building near the Temple, the gathering here is unusual and suggests they viewed Jesus’ high-profile case as an emergency situation.<sup>8</sup> 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,

**57**“This man too was with him.” But he denied it saying, “Woman, I do not know him.”

**58**A short while later someone else saw him This is traditionally a relative of Malchus, the servant of the High Priest whose ear had been cut off and then healed in the garden.<sup>17</sup> 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; The gaze of Jesus brings shame upon Peter for his cowardice.<sup>8</sup> 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. William Thomas Walsh wrote: “Years later, when men saw deep furrows on his cheeks, they said they had been worn by the tears he had never ceased to

shed for that moment.”<sup>18</sup> The apostle’s bitter weeping marks the beginning of his restoration.<sup>8</sup> St. Ambrose says that “there are two conversions in the Church: water and tears; the water of Baptism and the tears of repentance.”<sup>7</sup> (CCC 1429)

<sup>63</sup>The men who held Jesus in custody were ridiculing and beating him.

<sup>64</sup>They blindfolded him and questioned him, saying, “Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?”

<sup>65</sup>And they reviled him in saying many other things against him.

<sup>66</sup>When day came the council of elders of the people met, both chief priests and scribes, and they brought him before their Sanhedrin. This was the council of 71 members that governed the internal affairs of Judaism. It was composed of three classes: the elders of the chief families and clans, the high priests and this included the former high priests and elders of the four high priestly families, and the scribes who were mostly members of the sect of the Pharisees. The reigning high priest was the presiding officer.<sup>10</sup> They said, “If you are the Christ, tell us,”

<sup>67</sup>but he replied to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe,

<sup>68</sup>and if I question, you will not respond. Jesus paraphrases the response of Jeremiah to King Zedekiah. The entire context of this OT episode runs parallel to the trial of Jesus: Jeremiah was accused as a false prophet for announcing Jerusalem’s doom, abused by the head princes of the city who sought his death, and stood trial before the Judean ruler.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>69</sup>But from this time on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”

Jesus envisions the verdict of the Sanhedrin being overturned in God’s court. He draws from Psalm 110:1 and Daniel 7:13 to predict his enthronement at the Father’s right hand and his vindication as the royal Son of man.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>70</sup>They all asked, “Are you then the Son of God?” He replied to them, “You say that I am.”

<sup>71</sup>Then they said, “What further need have we for testimony? We have heard it from his own mouth.”

<sup>23:1</sup>Then the whole assembly of them arose and brought him before Pilate. Pontius Pilate was the Roman prefect of Judea and while he was insensitive toward the Jews generally, he remains convinced of Jesus’ innocence throughout the trial. He alone holds the authority to issue and execute a capital sentence in Judea.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>2</sup>They brought charges against him, saying, “We found this man misleading our people; he opposes the payment of taxes to Caesar. This was a false accusation as Jesus permitted the practice but stressed our greater duties before God.<sup>8</sup> and maintains that he is the Christ, a king.” The Jewish authorities depict Jesus as a threat to Roman peace in Palestine.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” He said to him in reply, “You say so.” Jesus hesitates to adopt the title because Pilate is thinking in purely political terms. Jesus’ kingdom is heavenly, not earthly, leaving Pilate with no legitimate grounds to accuse him of insurrection.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Pilate then addressed the chief priests and the crowds, “I find this man not guilty.”

<sup>5</sup>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.”

<sup>6</sup>On hearing this Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean;

<sup>7</sup>and upon learning that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was in Jerusalem at that time. This was a way out for Pilate and the charges did include causing commotion in Galilee.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>He questioned him at length, but he gave him no answer.

10The chief priests and scribes, meanwhile, stood by accusing him harshly.

11Herod and his soldiers treated him contemptuously Herod mocks the charge of kingship, unaware of Jesus' royal dignity.<sup>8</sup> and mocked him, and after clothing him in resplendent garb, he sent him back to Pilate. It is Herod who clothes Jesus in a robe; the Greek indicates a white robe, perhaps suggesting his innocence.<sup>5</sup>

12Herod and Pilate became friends that very day, even though they had been enemies formerly.

13Pilate then summoned the chief priests, the rulers and the people

14and 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,

15nor did Herod, for he sent him back to us. So no capital crime No crime deserving of death. has been committed by him.

16Therefore I shall have him flogged This involved being beaten with strips of leather tipped with knots or bits of metal.<sup>1</sup> and then release him."

18But all together they shouted out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us."

19Now Barabbas had been imprisoned for a rebellion that had taken place in the city and for murder.

20Again Pilate addressed them, still wishing to release Jesus,

21but they continued their shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Roman crucifixions usually were reserved for slaves, foreigners, revolutionaries, and the vilest criminals.<sup>10</sup> Dt. 21:23 says that "Anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse." Therefore, they thought that by crucifying Christ, it would silence any notion that he was a prophet.

22Pilate 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."

23With loud shouts, however, they persisted in calling for his crucifixion, and their voices prevailed.

The Jerusalem mob coerces Pilate to execute Jesus. By questioning the governor's own loyalty to Caesar, they threaten to report him to the emperor should he refuse their insistent request.<sup>8</sup>

24The verdict of Pilate was that their demand should be granted.

25So 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.

26As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, Roman law granted soldiers in Palestine the right to force civilians into temporary service.<sup>8</sup> who was coming in from the country; This man from Africa who was a pagan, not a Jew, was the father of two sons who became well known Christians: Alexander and Rufus.<sup>10</sup> after laying the cross on him, A microscopic examination of the fragments of the cross reveals that it was made of pine. According to an ancient tradition, the measurements of the cross were said to be nearly 189 inches in length with the crossbar being between 90 ½ to 102 ½ inches. A sizable piece of the relic is in the Vatican and is enclosed in one of the four huge piers that face the high altar.<sup>13</sup> they made him carry it behind Jesus.

27A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. There are numerous instances of men failing in the Crucifixion such as the Apostles who slept in the garden, Judas who betrayed, the Jewish and the Gentile courts who condemned, but there is not a record of a single woman ever asking for his death. A heathen woman had interceded for his life with Pilate. At the cross there would be four women but only one Apostle. During his last week the children shouted "Hosanna," the men cried "Crucify," but the women "wept."<sup>12</sup>

28 Jesus turned to them and said, This is the first time since his interrogation before Pilate that Jesus broke his silence. It was the Passion sermon of the Savior, or rather, the first part of it; the second part consisted of his seven last words from the cross.<sup>12</sup> “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children” Jesus is warning the women that another tragedy is heading for their city. It would soon be destroyed by siege, war, and fire in A.D. 70.<sup>8</sup> The catastrophe was a historical preview of the end of the world, showing how God’s judgment upon the one nation of Israel at the end of the Old Covenant era prefigures the judgment of all nations at the end of the New Covenant.<sup>12</sup>

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.’ This would normally be a sign of a lack of God’s blessing.

30 At that time people will say to the mountains, ‘Fall upon us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us!’ These are expressions of agony and despair drawn from Hosea.<sup>8</sup>

31 for if these things are done when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” The wood is a symbol of Jerusalem. As long as the city is like green wood, which is moist and unsuitable for making a fire, there is still time to repent and embrace the Messiah. Persistent rebellion, however, will make Jerusalem dry and fit to be burned. Jesus alludes to Ezekiel’s condemnation of Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C. where he wrote that God would enkindle a fire that would devour the wayward city.<sup>8</sup> The green tree can also be thought of as Christ himself and the dry tree as the world. He was the green tree of life transplanted from Eden; the dry tree was Jerusalem first, and then the unconverted world. His warning meant that if the Romans so treated him who was innocent, how would they treat Jerusalem that had condemned him to death? If he was so bruised because of the transgression of others, how in the final judgment would the guilty be punished for their own iniquities?<sup>12</sup>

32 Now two others, both criminals, were led away with him to be executed.

33 When they came to the place called the Skull, Legend has it that it was the burial place of Adam. Representations of the Crucifixion often show a skull at the foot of the Cross to indicate that the new Adam was dying for the old Adam.<sup>11</sup> they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus has 180 minutes left of his human life.

34 Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” Jesus shows mercy to his executioners realizing they are sinning in ignorance. The Passion of Jesus parallels the entire movement of Psalm 22 which narrates the rejection and final vindication of the righteous sufferer.<sup>8</sup> Luke’s gospel is called the gospel of forgiveness.<sup>3</sup> 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 Christ (Anointed one) of God.” Jesus is mocked by the rulers, the soldiers and one of the criminals crucified with him. Ironically, the titles they use to mock him are all true.<sup>3</sup>

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.” According to Roman practice, criminals displayed a sign inscribed with the charges brought against them. Jesus’ placard was written in three languages.<sup>8</sup> This relic was discovered by St. Helena and divided into three pieces. The part that was sent to Rome was hidden in 455 to save it from an attack of the Visigoths. It was found in 1492 during work on the roof of the church of Santa Croce. The words

were written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin in red letters on a measure of white wood. That section was about nine inches in length and the original is estimated to have been about three feet long.<sup>13</sup>

**39**Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Christ? 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." "The Last Judgment was prefigured on Calvary: the Judge was in the center and the two divisions of humanity on either side: the saved and the lost, the sheep and the goats." Archbishop Sheen continues to comment: "One would have thought a saint would have been the first soul purchased over the counter of Calvary by the red coins of Redemption, but in the divine plan it was a thief who was the escort of the King of kings into Paradise."<sup>12</sup>

**44**It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Centuries before Amos had foretold: "On that day, says the Lord God, I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight." The darkness was seen as a sign of God's judgment.

**45**Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. The veil separated God's presence from his people in the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>8</sup> The veil was a sign that God's infinite holiness could not be approached by sinners. With Jesus' saving death, forgiveness is secured for man, and access to heaven is reopened. This is announced by God himself who tears the veil from top to bottom.<sup>15</sup> The ground shivered and the lintel of the entrance to the sanctuary cracked down the middle. The huge ornate curtain hanging from it—a Babylonian carpet in white, purple, blue, and red, 82 feet by 24 feet—tore in two.<sup>18</sup>

**46**Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit;" Jesus is in full possession of himself as he entrusts even his death to the Father's care. His crucifixion is thus a willing sacrifice, not a tragic accident beyond his control. Jesus makes the cry of Psalm 31:6 his own. The entire psalm moves from lamentation to praise, expressing both the agony and the confidence of an innocent sufferer. It is because the sufferer trusts in the Lord's goodness that he anticipates his final deliverance and vindication in the end.<sup>8</sup> **and when he had said this he breathed his last.**

**47**The centurion This was a commander of 100 Roman soldiers.<sup>8</sup> **who witnessed what had happened glorified God and said, "This man was innocent beyond doubt."** The centurion was a Gentile.

**48**When all the people who had gathered for this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their breasts; These people were Jewish and beating their breasts was probably a combination of grief for the death of a man now recognized as innocent and of repentance for the wrongdoing in which they have participated.<sup>19</sup>

**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. Joseph is described in the same terms as Zechariah and Elizabeth and Simeon and Anna.<sup>16</sup>

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. Joseph provides for the Messiah the kind of burial he deserved: wrapped in linen, a symbol of immortality, and laid in a tomb that had not been used before.

54 It was the day of preparation, and the Sabbath was about to begin. Because the Sabbath rest began at sundown, Jesus was buried quickly in a tomb near the city.<sup>8</sup>

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. The little time between Jesus' death and the start of the Sabbath allowed for some preparation of his body but not the full customary procedures. The women return to finish on Sunday what was not completed on Friday.<sup>8</sup> It would seem from the work of the secret disciples and the women that they were expressing their love for Jesus but that they were not expecting the Resurrection.<sup>12</sup>

*Some of the material for this commentary was taken from: (1) "The Jerome Biblical Commentary, (2) "Workbook For Lectors And Gospel Readers: 2007" by James L. Weaver; (3) "Workbook For Lectors And Gospel Readers: 1998" by Lawrence E. Mick, (4) Commentary Notes from Tim Gray and Sean Innerst, (5) "The Navarre Bible: Captivity Epistles," (6) "The Collegeville Bible Commentary: Philippians" by Ivan Havener, O.S.B. (7) "The Catechism Of The Catholic Church," (8) "Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The Gospel of Luke," With Introduction, Commentary and Notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, (9) "Bible Basics" by Steve Kellmeyer, (10) "Dictionary of the Bible" by John L. McKenzie, S.J., (11) "Catholic Source Book" Edited by Rev. Peter Klein, (12) "Life Of Christ" by Fulton J. Sheen, (13) "Relics" by Joan Carroll Cruz, (14) "The Navarre Bible: ST LUKE", (15) "Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The Gospel of Matthew" With Introduction, Commentary and Notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, (16) "The Gospel of LUKE" by Luke Timothy Johnson, (17) "The Day Christ Died" by Jim Bishop, (18) "The Founding of Christendom" by Warren H. Carroll, and (19) "The Collegeville Bible Commentary: Luke" by Jerome Kodell, O.S.B.*

*In loving memory of Peg Schneller, who compiled these commentaries.*