

March 29, 2026

First Reading: Isaiah 50.4-9a.

The Master, GOD, has given me a well-taught tongue,
So I know how to encourage tired people. He wakes me
up in the morning, wakes me up, opens my ears to listen
as one ready to take orders. The Master, GOD, opened my
ears, and I didn't go back to sleep, didn't pull the covers
back over my head. I followed orders, stood there and
took it while they beat me, held steady while they pulled
out my beard, didn't dodge their insults, faced them as
they spit in my face. And the Master, GOD, stays right there
and helps me, so I'm not disgraced. Therefore, I set my
face like flint, confident that I'll never regret this. My
champion is right here. Let's take our stand together!
Who dares bring suit against me? Let him try! Look! the
Master, GOD, is right here. Who would dare call me guilty?

The Word of God

Thanks be to God

Psalm 31. 9-16

Have mercy on me, O Lord,

*** for I am in trouble;**

my eye is consumed with sorrow,

*** and also my throat and my belly.**

10 For my life is wasted with grief,

*** and my years with sighing;**

my strength fails me because of affliction,

*** and my bones are consumed.**

11 I have become a reproach to all my enemies

*** and even to my neighbours,**

a dismay to those of my acquaintance;

*** when they see me in the street they avoid me.**

12 I am forgotten like a corpse, out of mind;

*** I am as useless as a broken pot.**

13 For I have heard the whispering of the crowd;

*** fear is all around;**

they put their heads together against me;

*** they plot to take my life.**

14 But as for me, I have trusted in you, O Lord.

*** I have said, "You are my God."**

15 My times are in your hand;

*** rescue me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute me.**

16 Make your face to shine upon your servant,

*** and in your loving-kindness save me."**

Second Reading: Philippians 2.5-11.

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became *human*! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.

Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth—even those long ago dead and buried—will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father.

The Word of God

Thanks be to God

Gospel Reading: Matthew 27.11-54

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Narrator: Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, the governor, and the governor put to him this question:

Speaker: Are you the king of the Jews?

Narrator: Jesus replied,

Jesus: It is you who say it.

Narrator: But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him,

Speaker Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?

Narrator. But to the governor's complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charges.

At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them,

Speaker: Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?

Narrator: For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message,

Speaker: Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him.

Narrator: The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor spoke and asked them,

Speaker: Which of the two do you want me to release for you?

Narrator: they said,

People: Barabbas.

Narrator: Pilate said to them:

Speaker: But in that case, what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?

Narrator: They all said:

People: Let him be crucified!

Narrator: Pilate asked:

Speaker: Why? What harm has he done?

Narrator: But they shouted all the louder,

People: Let him be crucified!

Narrator: Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said,

Speaker: I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.

Narrator: And the people, to a man, shouted back,

People: His blood be on us and on our children!

Narrator: Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged and then handed over to be crucified.

The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him. Then they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying,

People: Hail, king of the Jews!

Narrator: And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucify him.

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross.

When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him.

Above his head was placed the charge against him; it read: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said,

People: So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!

Narrator: The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way, saying:

People: He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He puts his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, 'I am the son of God.'

Narrator: Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

Jesus: Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?

Narrator: That is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood there heard this, they said,

People: The man is calling on Elijah.

Narrator: and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink. The rest of them said:

People: Wait! See if Elijah will come to save him.

Narrator: But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

(Here all pause for a short time)

Narrator: At that, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people. Meanwhile the centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said,

People: In truth this was a son of God.