

# livingtheword

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hearing and living the Sunday Readings

## Reading 1 Is 50:4-7

The Lord GOD has given me  
a well-trained tongue,  
that I might know how to speak to the weary  
a word that will rouse them.  
Morning after morning  
he opens my ear that I may hear;  
and I have not rebelled,  
have not turned back.  
I gave my back to those who beat me,  
my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;  
my face I did not shield  
from buffets and spitting.

The Lord GOD is my help,  
therefore I am not disgraced;  
I have set my face like flint,  
knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

## Reading II Phil 2:6-11

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
something to be grasped.  
Rather, he emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
coming in human likeness;  
and found human in appearance,  
he humbled himself,  
becoming obedient to the point of death,  
even death on a cross.  
Because of this, God greatly exalted him  
and bestowed on him the name  
which is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue confess that  
Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

## Gospel Mk 14:1 — 15:47 or 15:1-39

Mk 15:1-39  
As soon as morning came,  
the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is,  
the whole Sanhedrin held a council.  
They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over  
to Pilate. Pilate questioned him,  
"Are you the king of the Jews?"  
He said to him in reply, "You say so."  
The chief priests accused him of many things.  
Again Pilate questioned him,  
"Have you no answer?"  
See how many things they accuse you of."  
Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was  
amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast he used to release to  
them one prisoner whom they requested. A man called  
Barabbas was then in prison along with the rebels who  
had committed murder in a rebellion.  
The crowd came forward and began to ask him to do for  
them as he was accustomed.  
Pilate answered, "Do you want me to release to you the  
king of the Jews?"  
For he knew that it was out of envy  
that the chief priests had handed him over.  
But the chief priests stirred up the crowd  
to have him release Barabbas for them instead.  
Pilate again said to them in reply,  
"Then what do you want me to do  
with the man you call the king of the Jews?"  
They shouted again, "Crucify him."  
Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?"  
They only shouted the louder, "Crucify him."  
So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd,  
released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus  
scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away inside the palace,  
that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort.  
They clothed him in purple and,  
weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him.  
They began to salute him with, "Hail, King of the Jews!"  
and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon  
him.

They knelt before him in homage.  
And when they had mocked him,  
they stripped him of the purple cloak,  
dressed him in his own clothes,  
and led him out to crucify him.

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon,  
a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of  
Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

They brought him to the place of Golgotha  
—which is translated Place of the Skull—  
They gave him wine drugged with myrrh,  
but he did not take it. Then they crucified him and divided his  
garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The  
inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews."  
With him they crucified two revolutionaries,  
one on his right and one on his left.  
Those passing by reviled him,  
shaking their heads and saying,  
"Aha! You who would destroy the temple  
and rebuild it in three days, save yourself by coming down from the  
cross."  
Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes,  
mocked him among themselves and said,  
"He saved others; he cannot save himself.  
Let the Christ, the King of Israel,  
come down now from the cross  
that we may see and believe."  
Those who were crucified with him also kept abusing him.

At noon darkness came over the whole land  
until three in the afternoon.  
And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice,  
"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated,  
"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"  
Some of the bystanders who heard it said,  
"Look, he is calling Elijah."  
One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed and  
gave it to him to drink saying,  
"Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down."  
Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When  
the centurion who stood facing him  
saw how he breathed his last he said,  
"Truly this man was the Son of God!"

## Reflection Questions

- What word, phrase or idea struck you in the reading?
- What do you think God is trying to say to you personally?
- Palm Sunday begins with a procession with blessed Palms. It is an expression of waving a 'victory flag' for the Jewish nation in the midst of oppression. They hope Jesus will be a powerful and forceful military and political leader. They cry 'Hosanna' - meaning 'Save us now!' What type of liberation are you expecting from God? What style of 'kingship' does Jesus actually reveal?
- Morning after morning he opens my ear - what practise could I develop to create space so as to be open and listen 'morning after morning'?
- Jesus reveals a lifestyle of 'downwards' rather than 'upwards'. Humble self-emptying service rather than Pride power-seeking. Is my life desire to move downward in service or upward in power?
- Jesus is bound as a criminal, interrogated and abused by the military, rejected by his closest friends who had loved him, mocked by religious leaders, experienced the depths of feeling abandoned by God. What part of Jesus' passion 'speaks to you' most personally? What lesson can you take for your life?
- Palm / Passion Sunday marks the beginning of Holy Week. How can I make the week ahead a 'Holy' time?
- What is one action that you will do to 'livetheword' this week?