READINGS - PASSION SUNDAY 29TH MARCH 2026

First Reading **Isaiah 50:4-7**

The Lord God has given me
the tongue of those who are taught,
that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary.
Morning by morning he awakens;
he awakens my ear
to hear as those who are taught.
The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious;
I turned not backwards.
I gave my back to those who strike,
and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard;
I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.
But the Lord God helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like a flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Responsorial Psalm

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

All who see me deride me;
they curl their lips, they toss their heads:
'He trusted in the Lord, let him save him;
let him release him, for in him he delights.'

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

For dogs have surrounded me;
a band of the wicked besets me.
They tear holes in my hands and my feet;
I can count every one of my bones.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

They divide my clothing among them,
they cast lots for my robe.
But you, O Lord, do not stay afar off;
my strength, make haste to help me!

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

I will tell of your name to my kin,
and praise you in the midst of the assembly;
'You who fear the Lord, give him praise;
all descendants of Jacob, give him glory;
revere him, all you descendants of Israel.'

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Second Reading **Philippians 2:6-11**

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming 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, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, 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.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation

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.

GOSPEL **Matthew 26:14-27:66**

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

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

N. At that time: One of the Twelve, whose name was Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said,

S. What will you give me if I deliver him over to you?

N. And they paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he sought an opportunity to betray him.

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying,

S. Where would you have us prepare for you to eat the Passover?

N. He said,

✠ Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'

N. And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the Twelve. And as they were eating, he said,

✠ Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me.

N. And they were very sorrowful and began to say to him one after another,

S. Is it I, Lord?

N. He answered,

✠ He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.

N. Judas, who would betray him, answered,

S. Is it I, Rabbi?

N. He said to him,

✠ You have said so.

N. Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said,

✠ Take, eat; this is my body.

N. And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying,

✠ Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

N. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them,

✠ You will all fall away because of me this night. For it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.

N. Peter answered him,

S. Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.

N. Jesus said to him,

✠ Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.

N. Peter said to him,

S. Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!

N. And all the disciples said the same.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples,

Sit here, while I go over there and pray.

N. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them,

My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.

N. And going a little further he fell on his face and prayed, saying,

My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.

N. And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter,

So, could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

N. Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed,

My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.

N. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again. Then he came to the disciples and said to them,

Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand.

N. While he was still speaking, Judas came, one of the Twelve, and with him a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.' And he came up to Jesus at once and said,

S. Greetings, Rabbi!

N. And he kissed him. Jesus said to him,

Friend, do what you came to do.

N. Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him,

Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?

N. At that hour Jesus said to the crowds,

Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.

N. Then all the disciples left him and fled.

Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were seeking false testimony against

Jesus that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said,

S. This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'

N. And the high priest stood up and said,

S. Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?

N. But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him,

S. I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.

N. Jesus said to him,

You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

N. Then the high priest tore his robes and said,

S. He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your judgement?

N. They answered,

S. He deserves death.

N. Then they spat in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, saying,

S. Prophesy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?

N. Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said,

S. You also were with Jesus the Galilean.

N. But he denied it before them all, saying,

S. I do not know what you mean.

N. And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders,

S. This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.

N. And again he denied it with an oath:

S. I do not know the man.

N. After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter,

S. Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you.

N. Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear,

S. I do not know the man.

N. And immediately the cock crowed. And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, 'Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly.

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.

Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying,

S. I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.

N. They said,

S. What is that to us? See to it yourself.

N. And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said,

S. It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money.

N. So they took counsel and bought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me.'

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him,

S. Are you the King of the Jews?

N. Jesus said,

You have said so.

N. But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him,

S. Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?

N. But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them,

S. Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?

N. For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him,

S. Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.

N. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them,

S. Which of the two do you want me to release for you?

N. And they said,

S. Barabbas.

N. Pilate said to them,

S. Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?

N. They all said,

S. Let him be crucified!

N. And he said,

S. Why? What evil has he done?

N. But they shouted all the more,

S. Let him be crucified!

N. So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying,

S. I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.

N. And all the people answered,

S. His blood be on us and on our children!

N. Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying,

S. Hail, King of the Jews!

N. And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying,

S. You who would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.

N. So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying,

S. He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'

N. And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying,

Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?

N. that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said,

S. This man is calling Elijah.

N. And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said,

S. Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.

N. And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

All kneel for a period of silence.

N. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said,

S. Truly this was the Son of God!

N. There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said,

S. Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead', and the last fraud will be worse than the first.

N. Pilate said to them,

S. You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.

N. So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise be to you Lord Jesus Christ