

Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday -- April 5, 2020 [Lutheran]

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Processional Gospel Mathew 21:1-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to you, just say this, ‘The Lord needs them.’ And they will be sent immediately.” ⁴This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

⁵“Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

¹⁰When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, “Who is this?” ¹¹The crowds were saying, “This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection about palms: When in the past we have read this text in church and carried the palm branches, we were celebrating the presence of Jesus Christ coming among us as we began all the services of this Holy Week. But you may trust that Christ comes also now to your home, to be with you as you begin this week of prayer, apart from others but still together with the whole church. Blessed indeed is the One who comes!

Let us pray.

O God of mercy and might, in the mystery of the passion of your Son you offer your infinite life to the world. Gather us around the cross of Christ, and preserve us until the resurrection, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading Isaiah 50:4-9a

⁴The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens—wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.

⁵The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward.

⁶I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting.

⁷The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint,

and I know that I shall not be put to shame; ⁸he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me.

^{9a}It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 31:9-16

9 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 neighbors,

a dismay to those of my acquaintance; *

when they see me in the street they avoid me.

12 I am forgotten like a dead man, 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

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Matthew 27:11-54

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹¹Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus said, “You say so.” ¹²But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. ¹³Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?” ¹⁴But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

¹⁵Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. ¹⁶At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. ¹⁷So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, “Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?” ¹⁸For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. ¹⁹While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, “Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.” ²⁰Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. ²¹The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” ²²Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said, “Let him be crucified!” ²³Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

²⁴So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.” ²⁵Then the people as a whole answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!” ²⁶So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

²⁷Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ³⁰They spat on him, and took

the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

³²As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; ³⁶then they sat down there and kept watch over him. ³⁷Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”

³⁸Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” ⁴¹In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, ⁴²“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. ⁴³He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, ‘I am God’s Son.’ ” ⁴⁴The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

⁴⁵From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶And about three o’clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” ⁴⁷When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, “This man is calling for Elijah.” ⁴⁸At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” ⁵⁰Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. ⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. ⁵²The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. ⁵³After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, “Truly this man was God’s Son!”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

As the Psalm today says, fear is certainly all around. This story of the suffering of Christ powerfully fits our time, and we can recognize ourselves in the fearful crowd, if not also in the betrayers and killers. But why does God in Christ enter into such agonies? To plant hope and life and God’s very self deep in all human suffering, so that from now on there is no place of hurt and sorrow where Jesus Christ is not there first. To defeat all dread and death and sin, so that we might

no longer live in fear. To plant the mind of Christ in us, so that we might turn to our neighbor in love.

Prayers of Intercession

In our separate homes but gathered together in the Spirit, we pray for the church, the earth, the world, and all in need, responding to each petition with words from one of today's psalms, "**O Lord, save us.**"

O triune God, God of majesty, mercy and might, hear and heed our fervent prayers:
for the church around the world, that the faithful be nourished by your presence in the word;
for pastors and bishops, that they be strengthened for their tasks of ministry;
for all those who are assisting the digital sharing of worship materials;
for guidance in keeping this Holy Week in devout prayer and praise;

O holy God, we pray to you: **O Lord, save us.**

For the earth, that it be saved from pollution and disregard;
for endangered animals, that they and their habitats be protected;
for scientists, that their knowledge of your earth will direct our society's choices;

O creating God, we pray to you: **O Lord, save us.**

For peace through the world, especially in Syria and Afghanistan;
for an end to terrorism and religious violence;
for all elected leaders, that they see our crisis rightly and make judgments wisely;
for wisdom in distributing governmental economic aid;

O mighty God, we pray to you: **O Lord, save us.**

For our distraught world facing the coronavirus;
for countries hardest hit, especially China, Italy, Spain, and the United States;
for those who grieve their dead; for the sick and their families;
for those fearful of an unknown future; for the millions of unemployed;
for children at home, that they be safe from abuse;
for those who have been led to rely on empty remedies;
for hospitals, in their desperate need for supplies;

O compassionate God, we pray to you: **O Lord, save us.**

For all who are facing the criminal justice system; for those falsely accused of crime;
for those who are incarcerated, that they be kept safe; for those who face isolation or execution;

O righteous God, we pray to you: **O Lord, save us.**

For those whose needs we know, for those whose needs are hidden;
for those with prior illnesses whose treatments are now postponed;
for all who today will die; for those who are homeless; for all who are sick;
especially for those we name here;

O benevolent God, we pray to you: **O Lord, save us.**

And finally, for ourselves:

O loving God, we pray to you: **O Lord, save us.**

With thanks for the technology by which we stay connected; with thanks for enough food;
with thanks for the support of our community of faith;
with thanks for the saints who struggled through life and died in you,
especially those Christian artists whose work has enriched our faith,
we praise your salvation now and unto our end.

O eternal God, we pray to you: **O Lord, save us.**

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray,
trusting in your mercy, through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray. Merciful God, accompany our journey through these forty days. Renew us in the gift of baptism, that we may provide for those who are poor, pray for those in need, fast from self-indulgence, and above all that we may find our treasure in the life of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread, Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil,
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

May the grace of Christ attend us, and the love of God surround us, and the Holy Spirit Keep us,
now and ever. **Amen.**