

PALM READING: Matthew 21:1-11 Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (NIV)

¹ As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ² saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to Me. ³ If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.' ⁴ This took place to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet: ⁵ 'Say to Daughter Zion, "See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'" ⁶ The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. ⁷ They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. ⁸ A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹ The crowds that went ahead of Him and those that followed shouted, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' 'Hosanna in the highest heaven!' ¹⁰ When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, 'Who is this?' ¹¹ The crowds answered, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.'

FIRST READING: Isaiah 50:4-9a The obedience of the Lord's servant (ESV)

⁴ 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. ⁵ The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backwards. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. ⁸ He who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me. ⁹ Behold, the Lord GOD helps me; who will declare me guilty? Behold, all of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

PSALM: Psalm 31:9-16 (NIV)

⁹ Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes grow weak with sorrow, my soul and body with grief. ¹⁰ My life is consumed by anguish and my years by groaning; my strength fails because of my affliction, and my bones grow weak. ¹¹ Because of all my enemies, I am the utter contempt of my neighbours and an object of dread to my closest friends—those who see me on the street flee from me. ¹² I am forgotten as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery. ¹³ For I hear many whispering, 'Terror on every side!' They conspire against me and plot to take my life. ¹⁴ But I trust in You, LORD; I say, 'You are my God.' ¹⁵ My times are in Your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me. ¹⁶ Let Your face shine on Your servant; save me in Your unfailing love.

SECOND READING: Philippians 2:5-11 Christ - obedient servant and exalted Lord (NRSV)

⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though He was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸ He humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

GOSPEL: Matthew 27:11-54 Jesus' suffering and death (MEV)

¹¹ Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "You have said so." ¹² When He was accused by the chief priests and elders, He gave no answer. ¹³ Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" ¹⁴ But He never answered him a word, so that the governor was greatly amazed. ¹⁵ Now at the feast, the governor was accustomed to releasing to the people a prisoner whom they chose. ¹⁶ They had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. ¹⁷ So when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you—Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" ¹⁸ For he knew that they had handed Him over out of envy. ¹⁹ When he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that righteous Man, for I have suffered much today in a dream on account of Him." ²⁰ But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and kill Jesus. ²¹ The governor answered, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They said, "Barabbas." ²² Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!" ²³ The governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Let Him be crucified!" ²⁴ When Pilate saw that he could not prevail, but rather that unrest was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous Man. See to it yourselves." ²⁵ Then all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" ²⁶ Then he released Barabbas to them. But when he had scourged Jesus, he handed Him over to be crucified. ²⁷ Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium, and gathered the whole detachment of soldiers before Him. ²⁸ They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him, ²⁹ and when they wove a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and put a staff in His right hand. They knelt before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰ They spit on Him, and took the staff and hit Him on the head. ³¹ After they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own garments on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him. ³² As they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. This man they compelled to bear His cross. ³³ When they came to a place called Golgotha, which means The Place of the Skull, ³⁴ they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He tasted it, He would not drink it. ³⁵ When they crucified Him, they divided His garments by casting lots to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, "They divided My garments among themselves and for My clothing they cast lots." ³⁶ And sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. ³⁷ They put His accusation over His head, which read: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. ³⁸ Then two thieves were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. ³⁹ Those who passed by insulted Him, wagging their heads, ⁴⁰ 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." ⁴¹ Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked Him, saying, ⁴² "He saved others. He cannot save Himself. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. ⁴³ He trusted in God. Let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him. For He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" ⁴⁴ Even the thieves who were crucified with Him insulted Him in the same way. ⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. ⁴⁶ About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" which means, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" ⁴⁷ Some of those who stood there heard it and said, "This Man is calling for Elijah." ⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran, took a sponge, filled it with wine, and put it on a stick, and gave it to Him to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said, "Leave Him alone. Let us see if Elijah will come to save Him." ⁵⁰ And Jesus, when He had cried out again with a loud voice, released His spirit. ⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from the top to the bottom. And the ground shook, and the rocks split apart. ⁵² The graves also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had died were raised, ⁵³ and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the Holy City and appeared to many. ⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they feared greatly and said, "Truly He was the Son of God!"