

Good Friday, 29 March 2024

First Reading: Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 The Suffering Servant of God

¹³ See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. ¹⁴ Just as there were many who were appalled at him – his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness – ¹⁵ so he will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand. **53** Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ² He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ³ He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. ⁴ Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. ⁹ He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. ¹¹ After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. ¹² Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

PSALM 22

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? ² My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest. ³ Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises. ⁴ In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. ⁵ To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. ⁶ But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people. ⁷ All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. ⁸ 'He trusts in the LORD,' they say, 'let

the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.’⁹ Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you, even at my mother’s breast.¹⁰ From birth I was cast on you; from my mother’s womb you have been my God.¹¹ Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.¹² Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.¹³ Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me.¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me.¹⁵ My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death.¹⁶ Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet.¹⁷ All my bones are on display; people stare and gloat over me.¹⁸ They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.¹⁹ But you, LORD, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.²⁰ Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs.²¹ Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.²² I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise you.²³ You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honour him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!²⁴ For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.²⁵ From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you^[f] I will fulfil my vows.²⁶ The poor will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the LORD will praise him – may your hearts live for ever!²⁷ All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him,²⁸ for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations.²⁹ All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him – those who cannot keep themselves alive.³⁰ Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord.³¹ They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!

Second Reading: Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9 Jesus, our great high priest

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin.¹⁶ Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.⁷ During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.⁸ Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered⁹ and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him

GOSPEL: John 18:1 – 19:42 The passion according to St John

18 When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. ² Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. ³ So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. ⁴ Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, 'Who is it you want?' ⁵ 'Jesus of Nazareth,' they replied. 'I am he,' Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) ⁶ When Jesus said, 'I am he,' they drew back and fell to the ground. ⁷ Again he asked them, 'Who is it you want?' 'Jesus of Nazareth,' they said. ⁸ Jesus answered, 'I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.' ⁹ This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: 'I have not lost one of those you gave me.' ¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) ¹¹ Jesus commanded Peter, 'Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?' ¹² Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him ¹³ and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. ¹⁴ Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people. ¹⁵ Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, ¹⁶ but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant-girl on duty there and brought Peter in. ¹⁷ 'You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?' she asked Peter. He replied, 'I am not.' ¹⁸ It was cold, and the servants and officials stood round a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself. ¹⁹ Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. ²⁰ 'I have spoken openly to the world,' Jesus replied. 'I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. ²¹ Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.' ²² When Jesus said this, one of the officials near by slapped him in the face. 'Is this the way you answer the high priest?' he demanded. ²³ 'If I said something wrong,' Jesus replied, 'testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?' ²⁴ Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest. ²⁵ Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, 'You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?' He denied it, saying, 'I am not.' ²⁶ One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, 'Didn't I see you with him in the garden?' ²⁷ Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a cock began to crow. ²⁸ Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. ²⁹ So Pilate came out to them and asked, 'What charges are you bringing against this man?' ³⁰ 'If he were not a criminal,' they

replied, 'we would not have handed him over to you.' ³¹ Pilate said, 'Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.' 'But we have no right to execute anyone,' they objected. ³² This took place to fulfil what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die. ³³ Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' ³⁴ 'Is that your own idea,' Jesus asked, 'or did others talk to you about me?' ³⁵ 'Am I a Jew?' Pilate replied. 'Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?' ³⁶ Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.' ³⁷ 'You are a king, then!' said Pilate. Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.' ³⁸ 'What is truth?' retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, 'I find no basis for a charge against him. ³⁹ But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release "the king of the Jews"?' ⁴⁰ They shouted back, 'No, not him! Give us Barabbas!' Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising. **19** Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. ² The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe ³ and went up to him again and again, saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they slapped him in the face. ⁴ Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, 'Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.' ⁵ When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, 'Here is the man!' ⁶ As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, 'Crucify! Crucify!' But Pilate answered, 'You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.' ⁷ The Jewish leaders insisted, 'We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.' ⁸ When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, ⁹ and he went back inside the palace. 'Where do you come from?' he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ 'Do you refuse to speak to me?' Pilate said. 'Don't you realise I have power either to free you or to crucify you?' ¹¹ Jesus answered, 'You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.' ¹² From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, 'If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.' ¹³ When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). ¹⁴ It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. 'Here is your king,' Pilate said to the Jews. ¹⁵ But they shouted, 'Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!' 'Shall I crucify your king?' Pilate asked. 'We have no king but Caesar,' the chief priests answered. ¹⁶ Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified. So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. ¹⁷ Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). ¹⁸ There they crucified him, and with him two others – one on each side and Jesus in the middle. ¹⁹ Pilate had a notice prepared and

fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ²⁰ Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. ²¹ The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, 'Do not write "The King of the Jews", but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.' ²² Pilate answered, 'What I have written, I have written.' ²³ When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴ 'Let's not tear it,' they said to one another. 'Let's decide by lot who will get it.' This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, 'They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.' So this is what the soldiers did. ²⁵ Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing near by, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' ²⁷ and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. ²⁸ Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, 'I am thirsty.' ²⁹ A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. ³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. ³¹ Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. ³² The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. ³³ But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. ³⁴ Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. ³⁵ The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. ³⁶ These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: 'Not one of his bones will be broken,' ³⁷ and, as another scripture says, 'They will look on the one they have pierced.' ³⁸ Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. ³⁹ He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about thirty-five kilograms. ⁴⁰ Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. ⁴¹ At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. ⁴² Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was near by, they laid Jesus there.