

Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday) (6th Sunday of Lent, Year B)

Procession: Mark 11:1-10—Jesus' Triumphal Entry

1. New Adam: Jesus rides “a colt on which no one has ever sat” (Mark 11:2)
2. Garments/Palms: king's coronation (2 Kings 9:13); victory procession (1 Macc 13:51)

Isaiah 50:4-7—The Suffering Servant

1. Servant: gives his “back” to the smiters; hides not his “face” from shame and spitting

Psalm 22—My God, my God, Why have You Forsaken Me?

1. Begins with “forsakenness” by God (22:1); ends with conversion of Gentiles! (22:27)

Mark 14:1-15:47—The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ

1. The Agony in the Garden (Mark 14:32-51)
 - a. Abba, Father: the only time Jesus prays “Abba” (Aramaic) (14:36)
 - b. Vigil: “Watch” or “Keep Awake (Greek *grēgoreo*) and pray”
 - c. The Young Man: Who is he? (14:51-52)
 1. The Apostle John (Ambrose, Thomas Aquinas) (but cf. Mark 14:50)
 2. James the “brother of Jesus,” later bishop of Jerusalem (Theophylact)
 3. Youth from Upper Room (Victor of Antioch; Eusebius, *History* 6.40.7)
 4. John Mark, the Evangelist (cf. Acts 12:12; Papias on Mark)
2. Jesus' Trial before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53-65)
 - a. Two Witnesses: required by Jewish law for execution (cf. Deut 17:6)
 - b. Son of Man: “sitting at the right hand” of God and coming “with the clouds”
 - c. Blasphemy: they recognize Jesus is claiming to be *divine* (cf. Dan 7:13-14)
3. Pilate Sentences Jesus to Death (Mark 15:1-20)
 - a. Scouring: leather whips/thongs fitted with spikes or pieces of iron or bone:

[The Romans] had them *scourged until their entrails were visible*... The men [were then] dismissed, *all covered in blood*, a spectacle that struck such terror into his menacing foes that they dropped their arms and fled. (Josephus, *War* 2.612)

- b. Crowning with Thorns: “purple cloak” was the color of the Emperor
 - c. Kneeling: something you would do before kings and gods (Jesus is both)
4. The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus (Mark 15:21-41)
 - a. 3rd Hour and 9th Hour: Jesus crucified; “breathes his last” (15:25, 33-34)
 - b. Tamid: “perpetual sacrifice”; offered every morning/evening (Exod 29:38-43)
 - c. Hours of Prayer: 9am and 3pm in the Temple (Acts 2:15; 3:1)

Cause the shoot of David [=the Messiah] to shoot forth quickly, and raise up his horn by your salvation. For we wait on your salvation all the day. (15th Jewish

Benediction)

5. The Burial of Jesus (Mark 15:42-47)

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (Passion Sunday, Year B)

1. In the Triumphal Entry, the crowds sang Psalm 118 to welcome Jesus as messianic king into Jerusalem. How are we welcoming Christ our King into our midst? What are we celebrating in this victory procession today?

2. Who do you think the “young man” who runs away in Gethsemane is (Mark 14:51-52)? Why do you think Mark makes sure to include this detail in his account of the Passion? What would you have done if you were in Gethsemane?

3. According to ancient Jewish tradition, what were the Jewish people praying for at 3pm on Good Friday? Take some time to meditate on the passion of Jesus with this prayer in mind. How does God answer their prayer?

For Further Study

1. CCC 571-630: This section of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* contains the Church’s official teaching the meaning of the Jesus’ passion, death, and burial. It is extremely rich and can serve as food for meditation.
2. Brant Pitre, *Jesus the Bridegroom*, pp. 82-113. An explanation of what scourging and crucifixion was like in the first-century A.D.