

## ***Reading and Meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ during Holy Week***

As we spend time apart from each other and from our usual worship gatherings this Holy Week owing to the Coronavirus epidemic, this does not mean that we are separated from the ability to hear and listen to the Word of God which proclaims Jesus' work accomplished in these days for us and for our salvation. The following are suggestions for your use during this week as ways for us to hear this wonderful Good News which is our source of life and hope.

### ***Reading through the Passion***

There are two ways that can be suggested for this. The first is by following the historic practice of reading the accounts of each Gospel on appointed days in Holy Week, which is suggested by the Lectionary in our *Lutheran Service Book*. If you choose to use this pattern, the readings would be as follows:

Monday in Holy Week:	Matthew 26:1—27:66
Tuesday in Holy Week:	Mark 14:1—15:47
Wednesday in Holy Week:	Luke 22:1—23:56
Holy (Maundy) Thursday:	John 13:1-17, 31b-35 (This is the Historic Gospel for this Day) <i>You may also read through the whole of John 13-17 which contains John's account of Jesus' words spoken in the Upper Room and at Gethsemane</i>
Good Friday:	John 18:1—19:42

The second way to read through the Passion would be by using *The Passion History*, which is a harmonization of the Four Gospel accounts. A copy has been included in this file for your use.

### ***Viewing the Passion***

With the time we have on our hands, one can also choose to watch one of the many film versions presenting the life of Christ. A personal favorite of mine is the old TV miniseries, *Jesus of Nazareth*. Others might consider Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, which is certainly not for the faint of heart. Pick a version that you like or remember, watch it all or just the "Holy Week" portion, and let the visual telling of the Gospel story transport your reflection.

Another way one could do this would be to search through all the different art collections available on the internet and find a piece that corresponds to the section of the Passion you are reading. Consider how the artist chose to portray a particular event and how the words of the Gospel inspired his or her work.

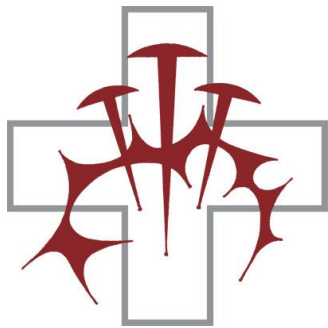
## ***The Passion in Music***

For more classically minded persons, listening to one of the many Passion Settings that have been composed through the centuries are a beautiful way of meditating on Christ's work for us. Of course, there are the Matthew and John Passions by J.S. Bach which come to mind, but there also are many other composers who have set the Passion Story to Music. Also, Handel's *Messiah*, especially its second and third parts, is a beautiful meditation on Christ's Passion and Resurrection, as well as our own hope for life everlasting. A YouTube search will most likely help find you anything that is out there, and quite possibly something that you would enjoy.

This is by no means an inclusive list of ideas for keeping these Holy Days by being in the Word. Feel free to come up with your own ideas from your creative minds. In addition, there are other ideas available for your use online. Use whatever fits your needs.

God's blessings to us all as we meditate together in this Most Holy Week on God's great acts of love for us and for the whole world!

Peace and blessings,  
+Pastor



# **The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ**

## ***As Drawn from the accounts of the Four Evangelists***

*There is a long-standing tradition in Lutheran Churches of the use of what is commonly called “The Passion History”. This harmonization of the Gospel accounts of Christ’s Passion from the Upper Room to His Burial has often been read as a part of Lenten Worship and was once also appointed as the alternate Gospel Reading in The Lutheran Hymnal for the weekdays of Holy Week.*

*This version of the Passion History was prepared for the Lutheran Service Book and was included in the Altar Book for that hymnal. We are providing this text for your devotional use as we spend this Holy Week 2020 at home during the Coronavirus epidemic to aid your meditation during this week on God’s great acts of salvation accomplished for us in Jesus.*

*The History is divided into five parts, making it suitable for reading on Monday through Friday of Holy Week. The reading is also divided into shorter paragraphs so that if you are reading it aloud in your family devotions a different reader can continue.*

✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ***Lord Jesus Christ, Have Mercy!*** ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠ ✠

### **I. The Lord’s Supper**

Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, also called the Passover, drew near, and Jesus said to his disciples: “You know that after two days is the Feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man will be given over to be crucified.”

Then the chief priests and scribes assembled with the elders of the people in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted how they might take Jesus craftily and put him to death. But they said, “Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people,” for they feared the people.

Then Satan entered into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, one of the Twelve. He went his way to the chief priests and captains and spoke together with them how he might betray Jesus to them. They were glad to hear him. He said to them, “What will you give me to betray him to you?”

They promised to give him money and agreed with him for thirty pieces of silver. He accepted, and from that time he sought opportunity to betray him in the absence of the multitude.

Then came the first day of Unleavened Bread when they sacrificed the Passover lamb. Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, “Go and prepare the Passover, that we may eat it.”

They said to him, “Where do you want us to prepare it?”

He said to them, "Go into the city and, when you have entered the city, watch for a man bearing a pitcher of water. When he meets you, follow him into the house where he enters. You shall say to the man who lives there, 'The Master says to you, "My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house. Where is the room for me to eat the Passover with my disciples?"' And he will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready for us."

The disciples did as Jesus had directed them. They came into the city and found it as he had told them; and they made ready the Passover.

When the hour was come, Jesus sat down and the apostles with him. As they were eating, he said, "I have longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for I say to you I shall not eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. This do in remembrance of me."

In the same way also he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

"Truly I say to you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father."

There was also a strife among them as to which of them should be accounted the greatest. He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' It shall not be so among you. He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that serves. For who is greater, he that sits at the table or he that serves? Is it not he that sits at the table? But I am among you as a servant. You are they who have continued with me in my temptations. I appoint you to a kingdom, as my Father has appointed me. You shall eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Jesus knew that his hour was come to depart from the world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who are in the world, he loved them to the end. Already Satan had put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him. Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God. He rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded.

When he came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but after these things you will understand."

Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me."

Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head."

Jesus said to him, "He who has been bathed does not need to wash more than his feet, for he is clean altogether. You are clean, but not all of you." He knew who was to betray him; that was why he said not every one was clean.

So after he had washed their feet and taken his garments and sat down again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me the Master and the Lord, and it is good that you say this, for so I am. If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. I have done this to show you the way to do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his lord; neither is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If you know these things, happy are you if you do them.

“I do not speak of you all; I know whom I have chosen. The Scripture must be fulfilled, ‘He that eats bread with me has lifted up his heel against me.’ Already now I tell you of this, before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe that I am he.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives anyone whom I shall send, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives him who sent me.”

When Jesus had said these things, his spirit was in turmoil. He bore witness and said, “Truly, truly, I say to you that one of you will betray me.”

The disciples looked at one another dumbfounded about whom he spoke. One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved, was leaning on Jesus’ bosom. Simon Peter said to him, “Ask who it is of whom he is speaking.”

That disciple who was reclining on Jesus’ chest said to him, “Lord, who is it?”

Jesus then answered, “It is the one to whom I shall give the piece of bread after I have dipped it.”

He dipped the piece of bread he had in his hand and gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. After the piece of bread had been dipped, Satan entered into that one. Jesus said to him, “What you are doing, do quickly.”

No one at the table knew what the purpose was of what Jesus had said to him. Because Judas kept the money bag, some thought Jesus had told him to buy what was needed for the feast or to give something to the poor. When that man had received the piece of bread, he went out immediately, and it was night.

When he had gone out, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and in him God is glorified. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify him in himself, and at once he will glorify him.

“Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going you cannot come.’ A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as I have loved you. For this I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?”

Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow me now, but afterwards you will follow me.”

## **II. Gethsemane**

When they had sung a hymn, he went out, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. Then Jesus said to them, “You will all be offended 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 risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.”

Peter answered and said to him, “Even if all the others deny you, I will never deny you.”

Jesus said to him, “Truly, I say to you this night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.”

But Peter said more vehemently, “If I have to die with you, I will never deny you.” And all the others said likewise.

They went over the brook Kidron and came to a place which was called Gethsemane. There was a garden there, and he went into it with his disciples. Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, for Jesus often met there with his disciples. And when he was at the place, he said to them, “Sit down here, while I go on ahead and pray. Pray that you do not enter into temptation.”

He took with him Peter and James and John and began to be full of sorrow and turmoil. Then he said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Wait here, and watch with me." He went on a little from them, about a stone's throw. He fell on his face and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what you will."

An angel appeared to him from heaven, strengthening him; and he prayed, saying, "O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." In agony, he prayed more earnestly, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done." His sweat fell on the ground like great drops of blood.

When he got up from prayer, he came to his disciples and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, your will be done." When he returned, he found them asleep again; for their eyes were heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. He left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Then he came to his disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. Look, the one who betrays me is here."

Even while he was saying this, Judas, one of the Twelve, came with a detachment and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees. They came to the place with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon him, went out to them and said, "Whom do you seek?"

They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus said to them, "I am he."

Judas, who betrayed him, had taken his stand with them. When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Whom do you seek?"

They said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

Jesus replied, "I told you that I am he. If I am the one you seek, then let these others go." This was to fulfill the word he had spoken, "Of those you gave me I have lost none."

Now he that was betraying Jesus had given them a sign, saying, "The one whom I shall kiss, that is he; seize him and be sure to take him away securely." He went straight up to Jesus and said, "Hail, Master," and kissed him.

Jesus said to him, "Friend, why have you come? Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"

They came then and laid their hands on Jesus and took him. When those who were about him saw what would happen, they said to him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

Jesus answered, "No more of that." And he touched his ear and healed him. Then Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its sheath. All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Do you imagine that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he will send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so? The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink of it?"

Then Jesus said to the chief priests, and the captains of the temple, and the elders who had come out against him, "Have you come out as against a thief, with swords and clubs to take me? When I was with you day after day teaching in the temple, you did not lay your hands on me; but this is your hour and the hour of the power of darkness. All this has happened that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook him and fled.

There was a certain young man who followed along. He had only a linen cloth about his naked body. They laid hold on him, but he slipped out of the linen cloth and fled away naked.

Then the detachment and its captain and the officers of the Jews seized Jesus, and bound him, and led him away to Annas first; for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. Now Caiaphas was the one who gave counsel to the Jews that it would be expedient that one man should die for the people.

### **III. The Palace of the High Priest**

Those who had arrested Jesus brought him to the high priest's house, where the scribes and elders were assembled. Peter followed him afar off, and so did another disciple. That disciple was known to the high priest and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest, but Peter stood outside at the door. So that other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper and brought Peter in. He went in and sat with the servants to see the end. He was warming himself at the fire they had kindled in the middle of the courtyard.

Meanwhile, the chief priests and the whole council were seeking evidence that might make the case for a death sentence, but they could not find any. Many bore false witness against him, but their statements did not agree. Two stepped forward and said, "We heard him say, 'I shall destroy this temple made with hands and after three days I shall build another, not made with hands.'" But even on this point their evidence did not agree.

Then the high priest stood up, moved to the center, and put this question to Jesus, "Do you have no answer? What is this evidence they have given against you?" But he was silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest put a question to him and said, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

Jesus said, "I am. You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of God's power and coming with the clouds of heaven."

The high priest tore his garments and said, "Do we still need any witnesses? You have heard this blasphemy. What is your opinion?" They all agreed that he was deserving of death.

Then some of them began to spit on him; they blindfolded him, struck him, and said to him, "Prophecy to us, O Christ, who is it that struck you?" The guards beat him as they took him away.

Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. One of the maidservants of the high priest came and saw Peter warming himself. She looked at him closely as he sat in the light of the fire, and said, "You also were along with the man from Nazareth, that Jesus."

Peter denied it and said, "I do not know what you mean." He went out to the forecourt.

Another maidservant saw him there and said to those who were standing around, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."

Peter denied it again with an oath, "I do not know the man."

A little later those standing around said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them. You are a Galilean. Your accent gives you away."

Peter started calling down curses on himself and swore, "I do not know the man."

And immediately while he was still speaking, the cock crowed a second time, and the Lord turned and looked on Peter. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." Peter broke down, and went out, and wept bitterly.

As soon as it was morning the chief priests with the elders and the scribes held the court session with all the Sanhedrin. Then they bound him, led him away, and turned him over to Pilate. Then Judas, who had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, was sorry and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood."

They said, "What is that to us? That is your affair." Judas threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed. He went and hanged himself.

The chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood." They took counsel and bought with them the potter's field to bury strangers in. That is why to this day that field has been called "the field of blood."

In this way was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by the children of Israel, and gave them for the potter's field."

#### **IV. The Praetorium**

When they had bound Jesus, they led him from Caiaphas to the hall of judgment and gave him over to Pontius Pilate, the governor. It was early. They themselves did not go into the judgment hall, so that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover.

Pilate then went out to them, and said, "What charge do you bring against this man?"

They answered and said to him, "If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you."

Then Pilate said to them, "Take him, then, and judge him according to your law."

The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." So the word of Jesus was fulfilled, signifying by what death he should die.

The charges they brought against him were: "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding us to pay taxes to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king."

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said to him, "Are you the King of the Jews?"

Jesus answered him, "Do you say this for yourself, or did others say it to you about me?"

Pilate answered, "Do you take me for a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have given you over to me. What have you done?"

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would have fought that I should not be given over to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not of this world."

Pilate therefore said to him, "Are you a king then?"

Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. I was born and I came into the world that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth hears my voice."

Pilate said to him, "What is truth?"

After he had said this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them, "I find no fault in this man."



The chief priests kept laying one charge after another against him, but he answered not a word. Pilate questioned him again, saying, "Do you answer nothing? See how many charges they lay against you." Jesus answered him not a word. Pilate was utterly amazed. He said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no case against this man."

They pressed their charges more vehemently: "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee to this place."

When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. When he learned that he belonged in Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him on to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem for those days.

When Herod saw Jesus, he was delighted, for he had long wished to see him because of what he had heard of him, and he hoped to see him do a miracle. He questioned Jesus repeatedly, but he gave him no answer. The chief priests and scribes stood there and vehemently accused him. Herod and his soldiers mocked him. They put a splendid robe on him and sent him back to Pilate.

Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that same day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other.

Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You have brought this man before me as one subverting the people. See now, I have examined him before you and have found nothing in this man guilty of any of your charges against him, and neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Mark this, he has done nothing worthy of death. I will have him punished and release him."

Now at the feast it was the governor's custom to release to the crowd any one prisoner whom they asked for. They had then a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. He was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection in the city. Pilate knew that it was out of malice that the chief priests handed Jesus over. Therefore he said to them, "Do you want me to release for you Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ?"

The chief priests and elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

Pilate asked them again, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?"

And they cried out all together, saying, "Away with this man, and release for us Barabbas."

While Pilate was sitting in the judgment seat, his wife sent him a message: "Do not have anything to do with that man; I have suffered much over him today in a dream."

Again Pilate addressed them, for he wished to release Jesus. He said to them, "What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ? What shall I do with him whom you call the King of the Jews?"

They all cried out, "Crucify him!"

Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has he done? I have found no guilt worthy of death in him; I will therefore punish him and let him go."

They cried out all the louder, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers of the governor led him away into the praetorium. They gathered the whole band of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a purple robe on him. When they had woven a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and a reed in his right hand, and they knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. They knelt down and did him homage.

Pilate went out again and said to them, "See, I bring him out to you that you may know I find him not guilty." So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, "Behold the man!"

When the chief priests and officers saw him, they cried, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"  
Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I do not find him guilty."  
The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God."

When Pilate heard this, he was more afraid and went again into the judgment hall and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to him, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to crucify you, and I have power to release you?"

Jesus answered, "You would not have any power at all over me, unless it had been given to you from above. For that reason he who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

This prompted Pilate to go on trying to release him, but the Jews cried out, "If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar."

When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement or, in Hebrew, *Gabbatha*. It was the Preparation of the Passover, about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, "Behold your king!"

They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!"

Pilate said unto them, "Shall I crucify your king?"

The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but rather a riot was under way, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this man; see to it yourselves."

Then all the people responded, "His blood be on us and on our children."

Then Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, gave sentence that it should be as they demanded. He released to them Barabbas for whom they asked, the man who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder. He had Jesus flogged and then gave him over to their will to be crucified. The soldiers mocked him, stripped him of the purple robe, put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him.

## V. Calvary

The soldiers now had charge of Jesus. Carrying his own cross, he went out of the city to a place called Skull Hill, in Hebrew, *Golgotha*. As they led him away, they laid hold of Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country. On him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. Following him was a great company of people and of women who bewailed and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said,

"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. The days are surely coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck.' Then they will say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do these things with a green tree, what will happen with a dry one?"

There were also two others, criminals whom they led along to be put to death with him. When they came to the place called Golgotha, they gave him wine mingled with gall to drink, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.

It was the third hour, and there they crucified him.

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The two criminals they also crucified with him—one on his right, the other on his left, with Jesus in the middle. The Scripture was then fulfilled which says, "And he was numbered with the transgressors."

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they cast lots to divide his clothes and decide what each should take. They made four parts, one for each soldier. There remained his tunic, which was without seam, woven in one piece from the top to the bottom. They said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to decide who shall have it." The Scripture was thus fulfilled which says, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." These things the soldiers did and, sitting down, they kept watch over him there.

Over his head was put the charge against him. Pilate wrote the notice to be put on the cross. It read, JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS. This title was read by many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near to the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The chief priests of the Jews then said to Pilate, "You should not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but 'This man said, I am the King of the Jews.'"

Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

People stood by, watching. Those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Aha! 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."

So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him to one another saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross that we may see and believe. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"

The soldiers also mocked him, coming to him and offering him wine, and saying, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself." The thieves who were crucified with him also reviled him. And one of the criminals who hung there with him railed at him:

"Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us."

But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God since you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are getting what we deserve for what we have done; but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Near to the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold your son!" Then he said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

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?"

When some of them that were standing there heard it, they said, "He is calling for Elijah."

After this, Jesus knew that all things were accomplished. Fulfilling the Scripture he said, "I thirst." There was a jar of wine standing there. One of them ran immediately to get a sponge. He filled it with wine, put it on a reed, held it up to his mouth, and gave it to him to drink.

Others said, "Wait and see if Elijah will come and save him."

When Jesus had received the wine, he cried with a loud voice, "It is finished!" Then he said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he died, he said, "Truly, this man was the Son of God."

All the people who had gathered to see the sight, when they saw what had happened, turned away beating their breasts. Those who had known him stood at a distance, as also the women who had followed him from Galilee. Among them was Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

It was the day of Preparation before the Sabbath, and this was Passover Sabbath. Therefore, so that the bodies should not remain on the crosses during the Sabbath, the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies removed. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. One who saw it is our witness, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth that you also may believe. These things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, "Not one of his bones shall be broken." And again, another Scripture says, "They shall look on him whom they pierced."

By this time evening had come. A respected member of the council, Joseph of Arimathea, was one who was looking for the kingdom of God, a good and righteous man who had not consented to their purpose and deed. He was a disciple of Jesus secretly, for he feared the Jews. Now he took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Pilate was astonished that he could be dead already. He called for the centurion and asked him whether Jesus was already dead. When he was assured by the centurion that it was so, Pilate granted Joseph the corpse and commanded that it be given over to him.

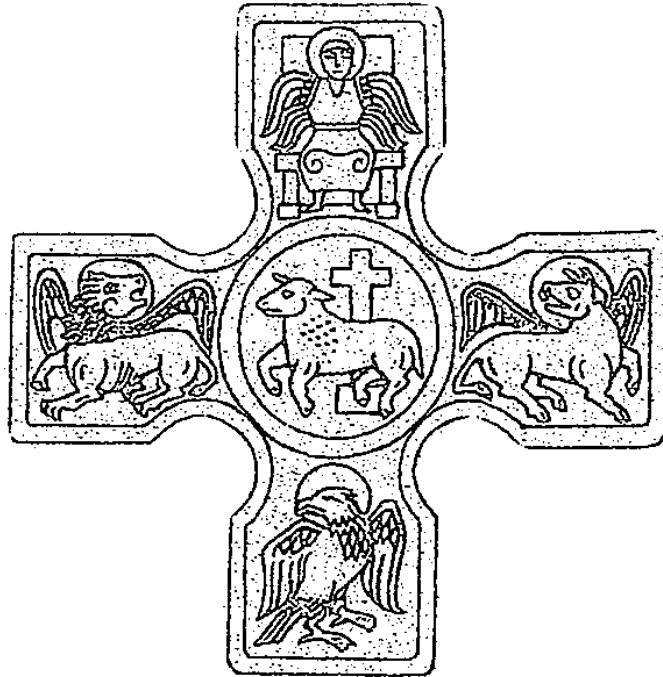
Joseph bought fine linen and came and took the body of Jesus. Nicodemus came also, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight. It was he who had first come to Jesus by night. They then took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, where no one had ever been buried. Joseph laid the body in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock, and rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed.

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were sitting there opposite the sepulcher and saw where he was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath day they rested according to the commandment.

On the next day, the day after the Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees went together to Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember what that imposter said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore command that the sepulcher be made secure until the third day to stop his disciples from coming and stealing him and saying to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' making the final deception worse than the first."

Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go and make it as secure as you know how.” So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.



### **Acknowledgments**

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ from Lutheran Service Book

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Created by Lutheran Service Builder © 2018 Concordia Publishing House.