

Friday April 3, 2020 Updates

Last week Carol Cisler had call from Mark and Judy McKarnin. They are well and staying home. They are able to be out on their patio and take walks at the nearby lakes, bird watching and enjoying nature. Yes, they are able to keep the six foot distance and do not go if crowded. They asked about many of our members and I offered whatever information I had. They hope to be able to return at the end of April.

Carol has also messaged with a few other members who all report doing well. I hope you have all been joining our Facebook services.

Congratulations to Annie and Bob Etter on the birth of their granddaughter!

Morning Prayer will be done by Father Gene from his house. It will be done by FB stream (live) at 10:30 from his Facebook page.

The community meal has been cancelled as well as the door-to-door outreach.

Attached to this e-mail is the sermon, readings and some ramblings from Father Gene.

First, I want to thank James and Ben for their ministries of bringing worship to St. Luke's congregation via Facebook since I can not be there. I also want to thank those who responded to my email with words of love and understanding, as I explained why I am not there.

I have been humbled in many ways during this critical time we are presently in. I have been humbled by not being able to see and touch my family, especially my new great grandson. I have been humbled by having to stay in my house and not being with the people of St. Luke's. Not being able to worship God on Palm Sunday by walking from the parish hall to the nave waving palms has humbled me. For far too long, me and I am sure most of you, have taken too many things for granted.

It has been through my time of meditation this week that I am reminded that the beginning of Christ's life and through the end of His life, was a life of humbleness. In fact, the Holy Week we are about to enter and the period of Lent, is meant to humble us.

Think about it. This day we celebrate begins by Jesus riding into Jerusalem, not on a beautiful stallion, but on the colt of a donkey and ends by dying on a cross. Why should Jesus coming into Jerusalem on a colt of a donkey instead of a stallion be important to us? Because we love pageantry. We love watching the Queen of England as she, dressed in her finest jewels, comes to important events riding in a carriage adorned in gold. We love watching her children and grandchildren get married at Westminster Abbey, especially when our presiding bishop is preaching.

I remember when I was in the Army at Fort Benning, Georgia and General Westmorland was coming to make a speech. He arrived in a motorcade with sirens bellowing, as if to say, "make

way, I am the most important person here, so make way, I don't have time to stop." I'll never forget his limousine, draped in two flags, one on each front fender, red flags with four white stars. As he exited the limo, someone opened the door for him, while all the "brass" stood at attention and saluted. Oh yes, we love pageantry, don't we?

The only display of pageantry I have seen better than that was a time when I was in Pittsburg and the President of the United States motorcade passed by. It was a long procession of cars, all black, flashing lights and wailing sirens, moving quickly through the streets, police stopping traffic along their route. It wasn't a parade; the president was simply moving from one place to another.

I was annoyed. Traffic was backed up everywhere and I remember thinking, "is this really necessary or just an ego trip?"

But then I realized that this was something more important than pageantry. It was a display of saying the president is an important and powerful person. It was a display of power in a world that respects power more than it loves pageantry.

I am ashamed to say it, but the president in the motorcade that day was not a president I respected. I even resented the honor that he was being accorded. But I also realized that I am an imperfect person in an imperfect world and who am I to judge. It is okay for me to have an opinion, but not to judge.

The point I am trying to make is that the most important person that has ever been born into this imperfect world we live in didn't live this way. The Son of God came into the Holy City, not by a parade of important people, but by a following of ragged disciples. He came riding on a donkey, and even this humble procession made a statement to the world that day. It proclaimed that God chooses to work, not through displays of power, but through displays of humility.

The God we Christians worship, often demonstrates that there is power in weakness, in suffering, and in adversity. That was true on Palm Sunday. That is true on Good Friday. It is still true today.

Every time I read the words, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" I want to cry. Not because of the words themselves, as powerful as they are, but because of who spoke them and where they were spoken from: Jesus, hanging on the cross.

The story of Jesus' passion isn't easy to hear. In fact, most of us are repulsed by it. I remember when the movie, "The Passion," was released and I went to the theater to watch it. I watched as those in the theater turned their heads away as Jesus was being tortured. They could not stand to see the suffering of Christ.

We, as Christians, must not turn our heads away, as we hear the words of Jesus spoken from the cross on this Palm Sunday. Why? Because we must see the agony of the cross if we are to experience the joy of Easter.

I, and I am sure many of you are going through our own personal agony since we cannot come in body to St. Luke's to worship. I never imagined how painful it would be to not be able to worship God in our church building. Oh, I preached sermons on it over the years but I never thought I would have to experience it.

The Coronavirus that we are experiencing now is not a curse from God as some have said on TV. But through these challenging times, when we are not allowed to worship in our churches, it is easy to ask, as Jesus did from the cross, "Where is God in all of this?"

Last week we read the story of the raising of Lazarus, and how his two sisters were upset because Jesus didn't arrive in time to save Lazarus from dying. Basically, as they approached Jesus they were saying, "Where were you?" Jesus may not have been there in bodily form but he was there spiritually for reasons only He knew.

In today's Gospel lesson, it is Jesus who asks, "Where are you God? Where are you when I need you the most? God, Father, I feel so alone.

We expect God to be with us when we worship in our church building, but what about when our church is not open to us such as it is now; Do we expect God to be with us via Facebook?" Well, we may not expect it, but I know He is. How do I know that? Because He is with us in our deepest time of need and for me, now is one of those times.

I remember when I was going through the process of becoming a priest, I had to go before a room full of clergy, dressed in suits with their collars on, who asked me all sorts of questions. One of them asked me, "When Jesus was dying on the cross, where was God?" I said, "God was looking down from heaven." I will never forget what the priest said, "No, God was also on the cross." God is with us as we worship no matter where we are. Sometimes it may not feel like it, but He is there all the same.

This morning we remember how Jesus cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But notice that Jesus still calls God "my God." It is in our pain when we question God's purpose in our lives, but even then, we believe in God and that is the important thing. We know God is with us through our pain. We know God will bring us through this time of not being able to worship in our church, but perhaps God is preparing us for a time when we will place more importance on the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, than we do the building.

Amen!

### **Ramblings from your priest for the Friday updates for April 3, 2020:**

I call this submission for the Friday updates "ramblings" because that is just what they are. I am sharing my thoughts, as your priest, to let you know I am doing fine but also to encourage you

to share your thoughts with your church family at St. Luke's to let them know how you are doing.

I have not left my house since March 22. That was when I conducted my last Eucharist service at St. Luke's via Facebook. I have been doing some yard work and have tried to get back into riding my bike. I have not had any visitors at my house. In short, I am taking the coronavirus seriously. Unless something changes, I do not plan to be back at St. Luke's until the bishop gives me the permission.

Once again, I want to say how grateful I am that James, Tammy and Ben conducted the morning prayer service last week via Facebook. But as most of you know we are no longer able to do that because of the limitations the bishop has put on the churches during the coronavirus epidemic. The bishops update to his previous letter has told us how we have to do our worship services for Holy Week.

I know we are going through challenging times, the likes of which this country has never seen. I just heard on TV that in the last two weeks over ten million people have applied for unemployment. I pray for those in our church whose hours have been curtailed or have lost their jobs.

I will be mailing in my pledge to St. Luke's and I ask those of you who can to do the same. Bills will continue to come into the church just as they continue to come to our homes and I know Hazel will continue to keep them paid on time.

I am open to suggestions, if any of you have ideas on the best way to have church via the media, let me know. I am not knowledgeable when it comes to streaming things from my house, but I am continuing to try to learn, so that I can continue serving as your priest. I plan on doing something Sunday, I am just not sure yet how I am going to do it. I will let you know through email.

Beth, James, Cliff and I continue to communicate through emails and messages by phone, to discuss any issues that come up. It puts my mind at ease to be able to communicate with them when I need something or just simply to bounce some ideas around with them.

Since the coronavirus outbreak, there have been times I feel inadequate to be your priest. Then I think about the decisions Bishop Breidenthal has had to make and my feelings pale to what I am sure his is. I want to thank him for his leadership during this trying time. Let us all keep him in our prayers as he discerns what is best for the churches in the Diocese of Southern Ohio.

Holy God, I know you will bring positive things out of this trying time we are in; you are God.

Fr. Gene+

***at The Liturgy of the Palms***

## The Gospel

### Matthew 21:1-11

When Jesus and his disciples had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying 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. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

"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."

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The 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!

"

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

## The Response

### Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

#### *Confitemini Domino*

- 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; \*  
his mercy endures for ever.
- 2 Let Israel now proclaim, \*  
"His mercy endures for ever."
- 19 Open for me the gates of righteousness; \*  
I will enter them;  
I will offer thanks to the LORD.
- 20 "This is the gate of the LORD; \*  
he who is righteous may enter."

- 21 I will give thanks to you, for you answered me \*  
and have become my salvation.
- 22 The same stone which the builders rejected \*  
has become the chief cornerstone.
- 23 This is the LORD's doing, \*  
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
- 24 On this day the LORD has acted; \*  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
- 25 Hosannah, LORD, hosannah! \*  
LORD, send us now success.
- 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; \*  
we bless you from the house of the LORD.
- 27 God is the LORD; he has shined upon us; \*  
form a procession with branches up to the horns of the altar.
- 28 "You are my God, and I will thank you; \*  
you are my God, and I will exalt you."
- 29 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; \*  
his mercy endures for ever.

## ***at* The Liturgy of the Word**

### **The Collect**

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Savior Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### **Old Testament**

#### **Isaiah 50:4-9a**

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

I 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.  
The 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;  
he who vindicates me is near.  
Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.  
Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.  
It is the Lord GOD who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

## **The Response**

### **Psalm 31:9-16**

#### *In te, Domine, speravi*

- 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."

## **The Epistle**

### **Philippians 2:5-11**

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,

but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.

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

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

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

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

## **The Gospel**

### **Matthew 26:14- 27:66**

One of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve; and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the

bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.” Judas, who betrayed him, said, “Surely not I, Rabbi?” He replied, “You have said so.”

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written,

‘I will strike the shepherd,  
the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’

But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.” Peter said to him, “Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.” Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” Peter said to him, “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And so said all the disciples.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I go over there and pray.” He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.” And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.” Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, “So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again he went away for the second time and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.” Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the

elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him. Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you are here to do.” Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?” At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I

sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’” The high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you,

From now on you will see the Son of Man  
seated at the right hand of Power  
and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?” They answered, “He deserves death.” Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, saying, “Prophecy to us, you Messiah! Who is it that struck you?”

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it before all of them, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He said, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” But they said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.” Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, “It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money.” After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter’s field as a place to bury foreigners. For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah, “And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set, on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, and they gave them for the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.”

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

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So 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?" For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While 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." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

So 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." Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and 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!" They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

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

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and 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." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, "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. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And 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?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for

Elijah.” At 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. But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now 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!”

Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, “Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise again.’ Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead,’ and the last deception would be worse than the first.” Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.” So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

*or*

### **Matthew 27:11-54**

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

Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So 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?” For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While 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.” Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?” And they said, “Barabbas.” Pilate said to them, “Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” All of them said, “Let him be crucified!” Then he asked, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Let him be crucified!”

So 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." Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and 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!" They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

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

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and 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." In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, "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. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'" The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And 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?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." At 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. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now 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!"