

The Holy Gospel

Luke 22:39-23:49



Narrator: The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.



Jesus came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples followed him.



When he reached the place, he said to them,

Jesus: Pray that you may not come into the time of trial.

Narrator: Then he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down, and prayed,



Jesus: Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.

Narrator: Then an angel from heaven appeared to him and gave him strength. In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. When he got up from prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping because of grief, and he said to them,

Jesus: Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not come into the time of trial.

Narrator: While he was still speaking, suddenly a crowd came, and the one called Judas, one of the twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him; but Jesus said to him,

Jesus: Judas, is it with a kiss that you are betraying the Son of Man?

Narrator: When those who were around him saw what was coming, they asked,

Peter: Lord, should we strike with the sword?



Narrator: Then one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus said,

Jesus: No more of this!

Narrator: And he touched his ear and healed him.

Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him,

Jesus: Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a criminal? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!



Narrator: Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. But Peter was following at a distance. When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. Then a servant-girl, seeing him in the firelight, stared at him and said,

Servant-girl: This man also was with him.
Peter: Woman, I do not know him.
Narrator: A little later someone else, on seeing him, said,
Bystander 1: You also are one of them.
Peter: Man, I am not!
Narrator: Then about an hour later still another kept insisting,
Bystander 2: Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.
Peter: Woman, I do not know what you are talking about!



Narrator: At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him,
Jesus: Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.
Narrator: And he went out and wept bitterly. Now the men who were holding Jesus began to mock him and beat him; they also blindfolded him and kept asking him,
Soldiers: Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?

Narrator: They kept heaping many other insults on him. When day came, the assembly of the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together, and they brought him to their council. They said,

Priests: If you are the Messiah, tell us.
Jesus: If I tell you, you will not believe; and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.

Priests: Are you, then, the Son of God?

Jesus: You say that I am.

Priests: What further testimony do we need? We have heard it ourselves from his own lips!





Narrator: Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying,

Crowd: We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king.

Narrator: Then Pilate asked him,

Pilate: Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus: You say so.

Narrator: Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds,

Pilate: I find no basis for an accusation against this man.

Narrator: But they were insistent and said,

Priests: He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place.

Narrator: When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. And when he learned that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him



off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time. When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad, for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign. He questioned him at some length,



but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the scribes stood by, vehemently accusing him. Even Herod



with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him; then he put an elegant robe on him, and sent him back to Pilate. That same day Herod and Pilate became friends with each other; before this they had been enemies.



Narrator: Pilate then called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, and said to them,

Pilate: You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and here I have examined him in your presence and have not found this man guilty of any of your charges against him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us. Indeed, he has done nothing to deserve death. I will therefore have him flogged and release him.

Narrator: Then they all shouted out together,

Crowd: Away with this fellow! Release Barabbas for us!

Narrator: This was a man who had been put in prison for an insurrection that had taken place in the city, and for murder. Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; but they kept shouting,

Crowd: Crucify, crucify him!

Narrator: A third time he said to them,

Pilate: Why, what evil has he done? I have found in him no ground for the sentence of death; I will therefore have him flogged and then release him.



Narrator: But they kept urgently demanding with loud shouts that he should be crucified; and their voices prevailed. So Pilate gave his verdict that their demand should be granted. He released the man they asked for, the one who had been put in prison for insurrection and murder, and he handed Jesus over as they wished. As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.



A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were weeping and carrying on. But Jesus turned to them and said,

Jesus: Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.



For the days are surely coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?



Narrator: Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. Then Jesus said,



Jesus: Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.

Narrator: And they cast lots to divide his clothing. And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying,

Leaders: He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!

Narrator: The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, and saying,

Soldiers: If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!

Narrator: There was also an inscription over him, "This is the King of the Jews." One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying,

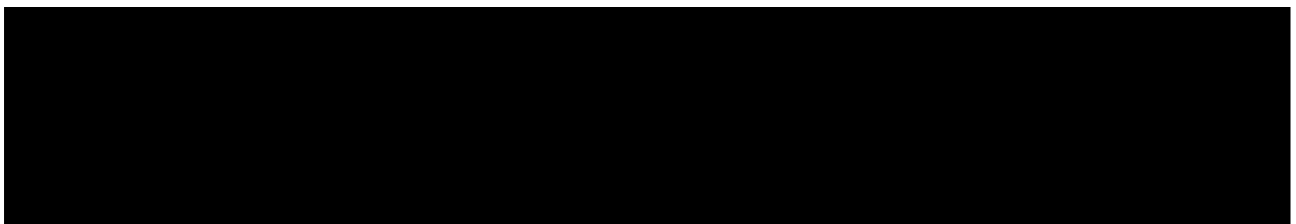
Criminal 1: Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!

Narrator: But the other rebuked him, saying,

Criminal 2: Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Jesus: Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.

Narrator: It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, while the sun's light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.



Narrator: Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said,

Jesus: Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

Narrator: Having said this, he breathed his last.

When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said,

Centurion: Certainly this man was innocent.



It is customary to keep silence and bow at this point.

With one glance at the Cross
you know that Jesus experienced
the bitterest of all human pain,
that torture called rejection.
It's impossible to be gay and not
know what Jesus knew, what God
knew when men did what they
did to his son. Let me shout
it from the rooftops, Christians,
don't you ever dare speak of Christ
unless you suffer with him on his
Cross! Get that folks! It's the
Cross that makes Jesus the Christ.
Not the other way around!

Anderson Clark, letter to his son,
who died of AIDS

Narrator: And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.



Passion Reading Images

1. "Israel to Greet Obama" by Israeli Government/European Pressphoto Agency from *The New York Times*, Wednesday, March 20, 2013
2. *Landscape, Cannes* by Max Beckmann
3. "Gethsemane's Ancient Trees" from *A Pinch of Salt* blog by M. Sonnleitner
4. *Jesus Praying* from <http://regansravings.blogspot.com>
5. *The Taking of Christ* by Valentin de Boulogne
6. "Nepali Police beat demonstrator in Katmandu" by Saurabh Das/Plice from *The New York Times*, April 10, 2006
7. "Chinese authorities detain Christians after attempt at Easter Rites" from *The New York Times*, April 2011
8. "Tibetan monk dragged by Nepali police during peace rally" by Brian Sokul from *The New York Times*, March 2008
9. "Courthouse" (Lima, Ohio), image search google.com
10. *Peter's Denial* by Carl Heinrich Bloch
11. *Prisoner Blindfolded* by Aloysius Patrimonio
12. "Angry Crowd" from www.preveilingtruth.com
13. "Chamberlain & Hitler," "Churchill, Roosevelt & Stalin," "Carter & The Shah of Iran," "Reagan & Gorbachev," "Saddam Hussein & George Bush" image search google.com
14. "Gitmo detainee" from www.mypetjawa.com
15. *Simon of Cyrene* by Derek Bridgeland
16. "Chicago mother Annette Nance-Holt takes stand against gun violence" <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=50139147n>
"Shirley Chambers at the funeral of her son" by John Gress/ Reuters
"Chicago woman loses 4th child to gun violence" jetmag.com
17. *The Crucifixion* by Graham Sutherland
18. *Reach Out* by Joseph Canger
19. "Roadside Memorial" image search google.com
20. Anderson Clark, letter to his son, who died of AIDS *Imaging the Word: An Arts and Lectionary Resource*, Volume 2, Susan A. Blain, Editor; United Church Press, Cleveland, Ohio
21. "Car bomb rocks Mogadishu" by Mohamed Abbiwahab/Agence France Presse/Getty Images from *The New York Times*, Tuesday, March 19, 2013