

# Passover becomes Passion

**Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)**  
(April 13): (R3) Mark 14:1-15:47;  
(R1) Isaiah 50:4-7; (R2) Philippians  
2:6-11.

John, one of the inner circle of Jesus' disciples, stood at the foot of the cross with Mary, the mother of Jesus. They both wept as they watched Jesus dying on a cross like a common criminal.

Less than a week before he had entered Jerusalem in the midst of a parade. Jesus rode on the colt of a donkey. The air exploded with shouts of joy and loud "Hosannas." People waved palm branches shouting their praise to God, looking to Jesus as their savior and Messiah. Standing beneath the cross, that day now seemed to be long ago and far away.

Who would have thought that their simple Passover celebration in the upper room would have led to this? The meal was perfect. But right in the middle of it all, Jesus did something very strange. He got a basin of water and a towel and began to wash the feet of the disciples. When he had finished, Jesus told them what he had done. He started talking about death and betrayal. He said that one of his chosen friends would betray him. They wanted to know who. Jesus handed a piece of bread sopped with gravy to Judas. He took off. No one but Jesus knew where he was going or what he was about to do.

Jesus went on and changed the liturgy of the Passover. He took a piece of unleavened bread, broke it and said, "Take, eat, this is my body." Then he took the cup, blessed it and said, "Drink from this all of you for this is my blood." They ate and drank, but they weren't re-



Father **Albert Shamon**

## A word for Sunday

ally sure what was going on.

After they had finished the meal, Jesus led them to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane so he could pray. They slept; he prayed and great drops of blood fell to the ground. All of a sudden the garden was filled with Temple guards, priests and Roman soldiers. In the middle of them all was Judas. He walked up to the Master and kissed him. The betrayal didn't surprise Jesus at all, but the kiss did. It surprised him and broke his heart: "Judas? Do you betray me with a kiss?"

The disciples scattered. Some, like John and Peter, followed to see what would happen. They dragged Jesus to Pilate's house, but Pilate didn't want to be part of the whole sordid affair. Yet to satisfy the Jewish leaders, he had Jesus scourged. But that was not enough for his enemies. They moved the people to yell out, "Crucify him!" So Pilate washed his hands of the matter, signed Jesus' death warrant and let Barabbas go. The priests and the elders glowed with pleasure.

They pushed the cross onto Jesus' shoulders; he nearly fell; and his face contorted in pain as the wood

hit the open wounds of his whipping. John followed at a distance.

The crowd mocked and taunted Jesus. Even the two thieves on either side of him mocked him. "If you're the Messiah, then come down from the cross. Save yourself and save us." But Jesus said nothing in his own defense, instead he turned his eyes heavenward and prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing." About three in the afternoon, Jesus looked up and with a loud cry said, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." And then he breathed his last.

Silence followed that cry. Then the centurion surprised everyone by saying, "Truly this man was the Son of God." When John heard those words, he was amazed. The supreme acclamation and revelation came not through a voice from heaven but from a Gentile, one of the executioners.

At that very moment, all of Jesus' teachings flooded into John's mind and soul to purge him of his grief. "The Son of God!" Now he understood. Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on the donkey's colt wasn't an appeal to gain a worldly throne. Jesus was making his final appeal for people to open their hearts. His lordship came through suffering, humiliation and death. He was the final sacrifice, the expiation for our sins. Jesus was lifted up on the cross for our sakes, and through his death we are set right with God.

Father Shamon is administrator of St. Isaac Jogues Chapel, Fleming.

## Daily Readings

**Monday, April 14**

Isaiah 42:1-7; Psalms 27:1-3, 13-14; John 12:1-11

**Tuesday, April 15**

Isaiah 49:1-6; Psalms 71:1-4A, 5-6AB, 15-17; John 13:21-33, 36-38

**Wednesday, April 16**

Isaiah 50:4-9A; Psalms 69:8-10, 21BCD, 22, 31, 33-34; Matthew 26:14-25

**Thursday, April 17**

Exodus 12:1-8, 11-14; Psalms 116:12-13, 15-16BC, 17-18, 1; Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-15

**Friday, April 18**

Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalms 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-17, 25; Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42

**Saturday, April 19**

(1) Genesis 1:1-2:2 or 1:1-2:6-31A; Psalms 104:1-2A, 5-6, 10, 12-14, 24, 35C or Psalms 33:4-7, 12-13, 20, 22; (2) Genesis 22:1-18 or 22:1-2, 9A, 10-13, 15-18; Psalms 16:5, 8-11; (3) Exodus 14:15-15:1; (Ps) Exodus 15:1-6, 17-18; (4) Isaiah 54:5-14; Psalms 30:2, 4-6, 11-12A, 13B; (5) Isaiah 55:1-11; (Ps) Isaiah 12:2-3, 4BCD, 5-6; (6) Baruch 3:9-15, 32-4, 4; Psalms 19:8-11; (7) Ezekiel 36:16-17A, 18-28; Psalms 42:3, 5BCD, 43:3-4 or when baptism is celebrated, (Ps) Isaiah 12:2-3, 4BCD, 5-6 or Psalms 51:12-15, 18-19; (8) Romans 6:3-11; Psalms 118:1-2, 16AB, 17, 22-23; (9) Mark 16:1-7

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