

Readings up to The Moment

Readings are from the New International version of The Bible, except from Isaiah, which is from The Message version.

They can be used over four days or all together on Good Friday.

- 1/ Over 600 year before
- 2/ The last meal before
- 3/ Before the accusers
- 4/ Before he died and the moment

FIRST READING:

Over 600 years before

Isaiah 53v1-12 The Message version

Who believes
what we've heard and seen?
Who would have thought
GOD's saving power
would look like this?

The servant grew up before God
a scrawny seedling,
a scrubby plant in a parched field.
There was nothing attractive
about him,
nothing to cause us
to take a second look.
He was looked down
on and passed over,
a man who suffered,
who knew pain first hand.
One look at him
and people turned away.
We looked down on him,
thought he was scum.

But the fact is,
it was *our* pains he carried—
our disfigurements,
all the things wrong with *us*.
We thought he brought it on himself,
that God was punishing him
for his own failures.
But it was our sins
that did that to him,
that ripped and tore
and crushed him—*our sins!*
He took the punishment,
and that made us whole.
Through his bruises we get healed.

We're all like sheep
who've wandered off and gotten lost.
We've all done our own thing,
gone our own way.
And GOD has piled all our sins,
everything we've done wrong,
on him, on him.
He was beaten, he was tortured,
but he didn't say a word.
Like a lamb taken to be slaughtered
and like a sheep being sheared,
he took it all in silence.

Justice miscarried,
and he was led off
and did anyone really know
what was happening?

He died without a thought
for his own welfare,
beaten bloody
for the sins of my people.

They buried him with the wicked,
threw him in a grave with a rich man,
Even though he'd never hurt a soul
or said one word that wasn't true.

Still,
it's what GOD had in mind all along,
to crush him with pain.
The plan was that he gave himself
as an offering for sin
so that he'd see life come from it—
life, life, and more life.
And GOD's plan
will deeply prosper through him.

Out of that terrible travail of soul,
he'll see that it's worth it
and be glad he did it.
Through what he experienced,
my righteous one, my servant,
will make many "righteous ones,"
as he himself
carries the burden of their sins.
Therefore I'll reward him
extravagantly—
the best of everything,
the highest honours—
Because he looked death in the face
and didn't flinch,
because he embraced
the company of the lowest.
He took on his own shoulders
the sin of the many,
he took up the cause
of all the black sheep.

SECOND READING

The last meal before

Matt 26:1-13

When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, **"As you know, the Passover is two days away-- and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."**

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him. **"But not during the Feast,"** they said, **"or there may be a riot among the people."**

While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. **"Why this waste?"** they asked. **"This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."**

Aware of this, Jesus said to them, **"Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. The poor you will always have with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this perfume on my**

body, she did it to prepare me for burial. I tell you the truth, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

Luke 22:3-13

Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.

And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. They were delighted and agreed to give him money.

He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

Then came the day of Unleavened Bread on which the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed.

Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

"Where do you want us to prepare for it?" they asked.

He replied, "As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you.

Follow him to the house that he enters,

and say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest

room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'

He will show you a large upper room, all furnished.

Make preparations there."

They left and found things just as Jesus had told them. So, they prepared the Passover.

Matt 26:20-25

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve.

Luke 22:15-38

And he said to them,

"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God."

After taking the cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying,

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you. But the hand of him who is going to betray me is with mine on the table. The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays him."

They began to question among themselves which of them it might be who would do this.

Also, a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest.

Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table?"

But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom

and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

But Peter replied, "**Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.**"

Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me."

Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?"

"**Nothing,**" they answered.

He said to them, "But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. It is written: '*And he was numbered with the transgressors*'; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment."

The disciples said, "**See, Lord, here are two swords.**" "That is enough," he replied.

Matt 26:30

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

THIRD READING

Before the accusers

Matt 26:31-35

Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'

But after I have risen,
I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

Mark 14:32-42

They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray."

He took Peter, James and John along with him,
and he began to be
deeply distressed and troubled.
"My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them.
"Stay here and keep watch."

Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible, the hour might pass from him.
"Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you.
Take this cup from me.
Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation.

The spirit is willing,
but the body is weak."

Once more he went away
and prayed the same thing.

When he came back,
he again found them sleeping,
because their eyes were heavy.
They did not know what to say to him.

Returning the third time,
he said to them,
"Are you still sleeping and resting?
Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Matt 26:47-56

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people.

Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them:
"The one I kiss is the man;
arrest him."
Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

Jesus replied, "Friend, do what you came for." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him.

With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

At that time Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Mark 14:51-52

A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

Luke 22:54-66

Then seizing Jesus, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest.

Peter followed at a distance. But when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them.

A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "**This man was with him.**" But he denied it. "**Woman, I don't know him,**" he said.

A little later someone else saw him and said, "**You also are one of them.**" "**Man, I am not!**" Peter replied.

About an hour later another asserted, "**Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean.**" Peter replied, "**Man, I don't know what you're talking about!**" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed.

The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "**Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.**" And he went outside and wept bitterly.

The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. They blindfolded him and demanded, "**Prophecy! Who hit you?**"

And they said many other insulting things to him.

At daybreak
the council of the elders of the people,
both the chief priests
and teachers of the law,
met together,
and Jesus was led before them.

Mark 14:55-65

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: **"We heard him say, 'I will destroy this man-made temple and in three days will build another, not made by man.'"**

Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, **"Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?"**

But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer. Again, the high priest asked him, **"Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"**

"I am," said Jesus. **"And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand**

of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

The high priest tore his clothes. **"Why do we need any more witnesses?"** he asked. **"You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"** They all condemned him as worthy of death.

Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, **"Prophecy!"** And the guards took him and beat him.

Matt 27:1-2

Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

Matt 27:3-10

When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. **"I have sinned,"** he said, **"for I have betrayed innocent blood."** **"What is that to us?"** they replied. **"That's your responsibility."**

So, Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

The chief priests picked up the coins and said, **"It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money."**

So, they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day.

Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

"They took the thirty silver coins, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

Luke 23:2

And they began to accuse him, before Pilate saying,

"We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Christ, a king."

Mark 15:2-5

"Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate. **"Yes, it is as you say,"** Jesus replied.

The chief priests accused him of many things.

So again, Pilate asked him, **"Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of."**

But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

Luke 23:4-16

Then Pilate announced to the chief priests and the crowd,

"I find no basis for a charge against this man."

But they insisted,

"He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here."

On hearing this,

Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean.

When he learned that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform some miracle.

He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer.

The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate.

That day Herod and Pilate became friends, before this they had been enemies.

Pilate called together the chief priests,
the rulers and the people,
and said to them,
**"You brought me this man as one who
was inciting the people to rebellion.
I have examined him in your presence
and have found no basis for your
charges against him.
Neither has Herod, for he sent him
back to us; as you can see, he has
done nothing to deserve death.
Therefore, I will punish him
and then release him."**

Matt 27:15-26

Now it was the governor's custom
at the Feast to release a prisoner
chosen by the crowd.
At that time, they had
a notorious prisoner, called Barabbas.

So, when the crowd had gathered,
Pilate asked them, **"Which one do you
want me to release to you: Barabbas,
or Jesus who is called Christ?"**

For he knew it was out of envy that
they had handed Jesus over to him.

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's
seat, his wife sent him this message:

**"Don't have anything to do
with that innocent man,
for I have suffered a great deal today
in a dream because of him."**

But the chief priests and the elders
persuaded the crowd
to ask for Barabbas
and to have Jesus executed.

**"Which of the two do you want me to
release to you?"** asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered.

**"What shall I do, then, with Jesus
who is called Christ?"** Pilate asked.

They all answered,

"Crucify him!"

**"Why? What crime has he
committed?"** asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder,

"Crucify him!"

When Pilate saw
that he was getting nowhere,
but that instead an uproar
was starting, he took water
and washed his hands
in front of the crowd.

"I am innocent of this man's blood,"
he said. **"It is your responsibility!"**

All the people answered,
**"Let his blood be on us
and on our children!"**

Then he released Barabbas to them.
But he had Jesus flogged,
and handed him over to be crucified.

FOURTH READING

Before he died and the moment

Matt 27:27-31

Then the governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him.

They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head.

They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said.

They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again.

After they had mocked him, they took off the robe

and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Luke 23:26-32

As they led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.

A large number of people followed him, including women

who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the barren women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!'

Then "'they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!" ' For if men do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed.

Matt 27:33-43

They came to a place called Golgotha (which means The Place of the Skull).

There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it.

When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. And sitting down, they kept watch over him there.

Above his head they placed the written charge against him:

**THIS IS JESUS,
THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

The Two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left.

Those who passed by
hurled insults at him,
shaking their heads and saying,
**"You who are going to destroy the
temple and build it in three days, save
yourself! Come down from the cross,
if you are the Son of God!"**

In the same way the chief priests,
the teachers of the law
and the elders mocked him.
"He saved others," they said,
"but he can't save himself!"

**He's the King of Israel!
Let him come down now
from the cross,
and we will believe in him.**

**He trusts in God.
Let God rescue him now if he wants
him, for he said,
'I am the Son of God.'**

Luke 23:36-43

The soldiers also came up
and mocked him.
They offered him wine vinegar
and said,
**"If you are the king of the Jews, save
yourself."**

One of the criminals who hung there,
hurled insults at him:
**"Aren't you the Christ?
Save yourself and us!"**
But the other criminal rebuked him.
"Don't you fear God," he said,
**"since you are under the same
sentence?"**

**We are punished justly,
for we are getting what our deeds
deserve. But this man
has done nothing wrong."**

Then he said, **"Jesus, remember me
when you come into your kingdom."**
Jesus answered him, **"I tell you the
truth, today you will be with me
in paradise."**

Matt 27:45

From the sixth hour until the ninth
hour darkness came over all the land.

Matt 27:46-54

About the ninth hour Jesus cried out
in a loud voice,
"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"
which means,
**"My God, my God,
why have you forsaken me?"**

When some of those standing there
heard this, they said,
"He's calling Elijah."
Immediately one of them ran
and got a sponge.
He filled it with wine vinegar,
put it on a stick,
and offered it to Jesus to drink.
The rest said,
**"Now leave him alone.
Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."**

And when Jesus
had cried out again
in a loud voice,
he 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 and those with
him who were guarding Jesus saw the
earthquake and all that had happened,
they were terrified, and exclaimed,
"Surely he was the Son of God!"

Matt 27:55-56

Many women were there,
watching from a distance.
They had followed Jesus from Galilee
to care for his needs.

Among them were Mary Magdalene,
Mary the mother of James and Joses,
and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Luke 23:50-56

Now there was a man named Joseph,
a member of the Council,
a good and upright man,
who had not consented
to their decision and action.
He came from the Judean town
of Arimathea
and he was waiting
for the kingdom of God.

Going to Pilate,
he asked for Jesus' body.

Then he took it down,
wrapped it in linen cloth
and placed it in a tomb cut in the rock,
one in which no one had yet been laid.

It was Preparation Day, and the
Sabbath was about to begin.

The women who had come with Jesus
from Galilee followed Joseph
and saw the tomb
and how his body was laid in it.

Then they went home
and prepared spices and perfumes.

But they rested on the Sabbath
in obedience to the commandment.