Palm Sunday Year C

Isaiah 50:4-7

This is the third Song of the Servant. There are four. As a prophet and servant of God, Isaiah prophesies, not only by his words but by his very life. He is a model in miniature of the Prophet and Servant of God, Jesus Christ, whose suffering and faithfulness will far surpass that of Isaiah.

4. The Lord God has given me a well-trained tongue, Isaiah was a student of God, not of a particular rabbi, and it was God who trained his tongue and opened his ear. He may well have been the greatest master of the Hebrew language; his writings are regarded as of the highest caliber. that I might know how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. The people felt that God had abandoned and forgotten them. They had come to doubt and they needed a word that would ROUSE them. The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference. Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may hear; God teaches him what to say. The preacher must first be a hearer of God's Word before it can be given to others.
5. and I have not rebelled, have not turned back. The Servant did not refuse the divine vocation or calling. This is in contrast to his generation in Israel who had both rebelled and turned away from God. Isaiah was faithful and for this faithfulness he suffered.
6. I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard, Plucking the beard was a sign of dishonor for the Jews. my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting. His sufferings were freely and nobly accepted.
7. The Lord God is my help, therefore I am not disgraced; I have set my face like flint, The prophet sets his face against all opposition, and finds the strength of flint in God's will and help. knowing that I shall not be put to shame. Isaiah's ministry and life are a prefigurement of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2:6-11

This was one of the earliest New Testament texts to reveal the divinity of Christ.

6. Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. From all eternity Jesus exists as God and from the moment of the Incarnation he began to be man. He is and always was God but he did not take advantage of the great powers and privileges of being God.
7. Rather, he emptied himself, Christ restricted his rightful exercise of certain divine abilities during his earthly life and accepted certain limitations of the human condition. taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness, and found human in appearance, Christ's humiliation lay not in his becoming a man like us and cloaking the glory of his divinity in his sacred humanity, but rather in his leading a life of sacrifice and suffering which reached its climax on the cross, where he was stripped of everything he had, like a slave.
8. he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, Here we note the contrast between Jesus and Adam. The devil tempted Adam, a mere man, to "be like God." Jesus Christ, on the contrary, who enjoyed divine glory from all eternity,

"emptied himself": he chooses the way of humility, the opposite way to Adam's. Christ's obedience thereby makes up for the disobedience of the first man and puts mankind in a position to more than recover the natural and supernatural gifts with which God endowed human nature at the creation. even death on a cross. Death by crucifixion was the most awful and degrading form of criminal execution in the ancient world. The Romans reserved it for slaves and insurrectionists. "Christ did not experience death due to the fact of being born; rather, he took birth upon himself in order to die." St. Gregory of Nyssa had this insight, for the breaking of the Old Covenant required DEATH and that is why Jesus came.
9. Because of this, God greatly exalted him "Greatly exalted" compounds the notion of exaltation. This was done by raising Christ from the dead, enthroning him in heaven, and clothing his humanity with divine glory. and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, The angel Gabriel told Joseph in a dream that the child was to be named "Jesus" which means, "Yahweh saves". "Christ" means "the anointed one" so by this name Christians confessed their belief that Jesus was the Messiah and that includes the concepts of King, Lord, Mediator, Priest, Prophet, Savior, Servant of the Lord, Son of God, Son of Man, Word and Wonderworker.
10. that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, This is an act of religious devotion which transfers to Jesus the adoration given to Yahweh in Is 45:23: "To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." It is a universal and cosmic adoration paid to a sovereign. of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, Christ's lordship extends to all created things. Sacred Scripture usually speaks of "heaven and earth" when referring to the entire created universe; by mentioning here the underworld as well, it is emphasizing that nothing escapes his dominion.
11. and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Out of respect for the holiness of God, the people of Israel do not pronounce his name. In the reading of Sacred Scripture, the revealed name (Yahweh) is replaced by the divine title "Lord". It is under this title that the divinity of Jesus will be acclaimed: "Jesus is Lord." The title "Lord" was also used for Roman emperors. Neither the divine honor it accords to Christ nor the challenge this poses to Caesar would have been lost on Paul's readers. The second commandment is that you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Because the Lord's name is holy, it should not be used in speech except to bless, praise and glorify it.

Mark 14:1-72, 15:1-47
This Gospel was written by Mark who was a disciple of Simon Peter.

1. The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were to take place in two days' time. So the chief priests and the scribes were seeking a way to arrest him by treachery and put him to death. The Passover was the yearly Jewish feast celebrating Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery. It was the most important of the three feasts that required Jewish men over the age of 12 to travel to Jerusalem.
2. They said, "Not during the festival, for fear that there may be a riot among the people." Jerusalem's normal population of approximately 50,000 swelled to several hundred thousand with the influx of Passover pilgrims. This made the Jerusalem

leaders think twice about arresting Jesus, a popular figure with the pilgrims in contrast to the hostility of the Jewish leaders, since it could easily incite a violent reaction from the Jews and ultimately bring Rome's reprisal upon the city.
3. When he was in Bethany reclining at table in the house of Simon the leper, This must refer to an affliction from which Simon has already been cured; otherwise he would have been "unclean." a woman According to John 12:3, she was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. came with an alabaster jar of perfumed oil, costly genuine spikenard. She broke the alabaster jar This allowed the last drop to flow and no one else could use the jar. and poured it on his head. Anointing of the head is an acknowledgment of his messianic dignity.
4. There were some who were indignant. "Why has there been this waste of perfumed oil?
5. It could have been sold for more than three hundred days' wages and the money given to the poor." They were infuriated with her.
6. Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you make trouble for her? She has done a good thing for me. Her anointing of him has marked him as the Messiah; she alone, in contrast to the chief priests and scribes, and even Judas, has correctly perceived his identity.
7. The poor you will always have with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them, but you will not always have me.
8. She has done what she could. She has anticipated anointing my body for burial. It was customary to withhold burial ointments from the bodies of executed criminals. The woman's gesture remedies this deficiency in anticipation of Jesus' impending death as a falsely accused enemy of Rome.
9. Amen, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."
10. Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went off to the chief priests to hand him over to them.
11. When they heard him they were pleased and promised to pay him money. According to Mt 26:15, Judas was given thirty pieces of silver. Then he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.
12. On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" Pascal lambs were sacrificed in the Temple courts the afternoon before the feast. At sundown families or small groups would gather to eat a Seder meal of lamb, unleavened bread, wine and herbs.
13. He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you carrying a jar of water. This was an unusual sight in the context of Jewish culture, since women customarily assumed the task of drawing and carrying water. Follow him.
14. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house; 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"'
15. Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Ancient tradition says that it was the house of Mark's mother, who was also named Mary. Make the preparations for us there."

16. The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover. Jesus probably wanted to avoid having Judas know in advance the exact place where the Supper would be held to prevent him from notifying the Sanhedrin.
17. When it was evening, he came with the Twelve.
18. And as they reclined at table and were eating, Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me."
19. They began to be distressed and to say to him, one by one, "Surely it is not I?"
20. He said to them, "One of the Twelve, the one who dips with me into the dish.
21. For the Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born." His words allude to Ps. 41:10 "Even my friend who had my trust and partook of my bread, has raised his heel against me."
22. While they were eating he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take it; this is my body." Jesus identifies the unleavened bread of the Passover feast with his own flesh. The gift of his humanity in the sacrament is inseparable from his self-offering on the Cross since together they constitute a single sacrifice in which Jesus is both the priest and the sacrificial victim of the New Covenant.
23. Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it.

24. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, As the Old Covenant between Yahweh and Israel was sealed through sacrificial blood on Mt. Sinai, the New Covenant between Christ and the Church is sealed through his own blood poured out in the upper room on Mt. Zion. which will be shed for many. This means a great number without restriction.
This was probably the third cup of the Sedar Meal, the cup of benediction, which followed the main course and preceded the singing of the Hallel. Jesus eliminated the fourth cup at the meal.
25. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." In John 19:28 Jesus drinks a sponge full of vinegar just before his death and then says: "It is finished." This would seem to refer to the meal, the death and the Old Covenant (which is completed in the New Covenant.)
26. Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.
27. Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will have your faith shaken, for it is written; 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be dispersed.'
28. But after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee."
29. Peter said to him, "Even though all should have their faith shaken, mine will not be."
30. Then Jesus said to him, "Amen I say to you, this very night before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times."
31. But he vehemently replied, "Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you." And they all spoke similarly. This shows us that our Lord takes into account the weaknesses of those whom he calls to follow him. The disciples are just ordinary men, complete with defects and shortcomings, more eager to say than to

do. Nevertheless, Jesus calls them to be fishers of men. In fact, God usually seeks out deficient instruments so that the work can more clearly be seen to be his.
32. Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." This refers to a garden area facing Jerusalem on the western slope of the Mount of Olives.
33. He took with him Peter, James and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. Jesus took with him only the three disciples who had seen his glorification on Mount Tabor, that these who saw his power should also see his sorrow and thus know that he was truly man.
34. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch."
35. He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him;
36. he said, "Abba, This is an Aramaic word meaning "Father", which is how children intimately addressed their parents. Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will." Jesus fears his Passion and Crucifixion. As a man, he has a natural aversion to suffering that is both physical (crucifixion) and spiritual (bearing the sins of the world). As God's Son, he could have suppressed these human passions by divine effort, but he chose to embrace the Father's plan even in agony. This ordeal in the garden is traditionally viewed as Satan's most aggressive assault on Jesus.
37. When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Peter has not been called Simon since his pre-Christian days.(Mark 3:16) This is the only personal request that Jesus ever makes that is recorded.
38. Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. Prayer and watchfulness are necessary to withstand the attacks of Satan. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." Here Jesus refers to man's inner struggle where the flesh, wounded by sin, is constantly at war with the spirit. The graces we need to overcome our weaknesses must be sought through persistent prayer.
39. Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing.
40. Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him.
41. He returned a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners.
42. Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is at hand."
43. Then, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.
44. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely."
45. He came and immediately went over to him and said, "Rabbi." And he kissed him. Normally a gesture of affection in the Bible, Judas turns this kiss into a sign of betrayal.
46. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him.

47. One of the bystanders drew his sword, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. John specifies that Peter was the bearer of the sword and he identifies the victim as "Malchus." Luke goes on to tell us that Jesus healed the man's ear.
48. Jesus said to them in reply, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to seize me?
49. Day after day I was with you teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me; but that the Scriptures may be fulfilled."
50. And they all left him and fled.
51. Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him,
52. but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked. Many scholars identify this young man as Mark, the writer of the Gospel. It is probable that the Garden of Olives belonged to Mark's family, which would explain his presence there at night-time.
53. They led Jesus away to the high priest, Caiaphas was the high priest at the time.(Mt. 26:57) and all the chief priests and elders and the scribes came together. This meeting was probably held in the last hours of the night, around three or four o'clock in the morning. This was highly irregular as they usually met during the daytime and in the Temple. Everything suggests that the rulers arranged this session secretly, probably to avoid opposition from the people. The ill-treatment of the prisoner before sentence was also illegal.
54. Peter followed him at a distance into the high priest's courtyard and was seated with the guards, warming himself at the fire.
55. The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin This was the supreme court of the Jews. Its primary role was to enforce Jewish law and custom. Fully assembled, the Sanhedrin probably consisted of 71 members: the reigning high priest who headed the court, the "elders" of Jerusalem's leading families, "chief priests" who had held the office of high priest, and "scribes" or professional lawyers who were experts in the Law of Moses. Under Roman rule, the Sanhedrin retained considerable freedom to regulate the civil and religious affairs of Jewish life. Only the right to administer capital punishment was denied them. kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none.
56. Many gave false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree.
57. Some took the stand and testified falsely against him,
58. alleging, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands." False witnesses misconstrue the cryptic statements recorded in John 2:19 and Mk. 13:2. In the former passage Jesus foretold his Resurrection in terms of rebuilding his crucified body and in the latter context he was predicting the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple. Only shades of his intended meaning filter through this accusation, since Jesus never claimed he would reconstruct the Jerusalem sanctuary after its downfall. The scandal of the false indictment is twofold: 1. Jesus claims he will erect a new sanctuary in the course of a weekend when the Jerusalem Temple has been at that time 46 years in the making and 2. he claims he will build it without hands, while an army of manual laborers are still at work erecting the existing Temple.
59. Even so their testimony did not agree.

60. The high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus, saying, "Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?"
61. But he was silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him and said to him, "Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed One?"
62. Then Jesus answered, "I am; Jesus accepts the charge that he is the Son of God and the Messiah of Israel. and 'you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven."' Jesus claims that God himself will overturn the death sentence of the Sanhedrin by raising him from the dead and enthroning him in glory.
63. At that the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further need have we of witnesses? The Bible often associates this gesture with overwhelming sorrow or distress. Here the high priest disregards the Mosaic Law, which forbids priests to tear their vestments. St. Bede commented that the drama of Caiaphas tearing his vestments signifies the termination of the Old Covenant priesthood while in contrast, the seamless vestment of Jesus is not torn but remains intact signifying that the new priesthood of Christ will endure forever.
64. You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as deserving to die. The Sanhedrin charges Jesus with the capital crime of blasphemy. They register his claim to a heavenly enthronement as an insult to God's name.
65. Some began to spit on him. They blindfolded him and struck him and said to him, "Prophesy!" And the guards greeted him with blows.
66. While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the high priest's maids came along.
67. Seeing Peter warming himself, she looked intently at him and said, "You too were with the Nazarene, Jesus."
68. But he denied it saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." So he went out into the outer court. Then the cock crowed.
69. The maid saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them.
70. Once again he denied it. A little later the bystanders said to Peter once more, "surely you are one of them; for you too are a Galilean."
71. He began to curse and to swear, "I do not know this man about whom you are talking."
72. And immediately a cock crowed a second time. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times." He broke down and wept. Years later, when men saw deep furrows on his cheeks, they said they had been worn by the tears he had never ceased to shed for that moment.
15:1 As soon as morning came, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate was the Roman Governor or Procurator. He is now immortalized in the Apostles' Creed as responsible for the suffering and crucifixion of Christ.

2. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The Jewish leaders give Jesus a title with obvious political overtones, fully aware that Roman law punishes the crime of treason by death.
3. The chief priests accused him of many things.
4. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of."
5. Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.
6. Now on the occasion of the feast he used to release to them one prisoner whom they requested.
7. A man called Barabbas was then in prison along with the rebels who had committed murder in a rebellion. Barabbas was an Aramaic name that literally means "son of the father." This was a terrible irony as the guilty Barabbas is released in place of Jesus the truly innocent Son of the Father.
8. The crowd came forward and began to ask him to do for them as he was accustomed.
9. Pilate answered, "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?"
10. For he knew that it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed him over.
11. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead.
12. Pilate again said to them in reply, "Then what do you want me to do with the man you call the king of the Jews?"
13. They shouted again, "Crucify him."
14. Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" They only shouted the louder, "Crucify him."
15. So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, He was given at least 60 lashes with a bone-studded whip. handed him over to be crucified. Pilate crumbled beneath the pressure of the Jerusalem mob. As the Roman magistrate, Pilate alone had the authority to execute Jesus, since the Jewish leaders were powerless to enforce the penalty of capital punishment without him.
16. The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort. This was the official residence of Pilate when he was in Jerusalem. The "cohort" was a battalion of about 600 men.
17. They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him. In the western world we think of the crown as a circular band similar to a wreath but in the Orient, crowns took the shape of a cap or helmet, that is, one that covered the whole top of the head. This shape of a cap is supported by those who have studied the Holy Shroud. Some estimate that there were 60 to 70 thorns in the crown of Christ.
18. They began to salute him with, "Hail, King of the Jews!"
19. and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him. They knelt before him in homage. The soldier's remain unaware in their ridicule that Jesus is truly a king. Adorning him with a purple cloak (the color for royalty) and a crown and kneeling in false homage, they unwittingly bear witness to the royal identity of Jesus.

20. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him.
21. They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. Roman garrisons in NT Palestine claimed the right to recruit Jews for temporary service. Simon, originally from the African city of Cyrene, helped Jesus carry the cross. There is no record of a single word being exchanged between them but later Scriptural references make it almost certain that he and his sons, Alexander and Rufus, became Christians. Warren Carroll describes the Church in Antioch in 45 A.D.: they fasted and prayed and gathered at the Eucharist where they commissioned Paul and Barnabas for missionary work. The gathering was presided over by five men including Simon, called Niger, the black, from Cyrene, who may well have been this Simon of Cyrene. A later legend made Simon a bishop of the church in Bosra, Arabia, and a martyr.
22. They brought him to the place of Golgotha—which is translated Place of the Skull. The spot may have been named this because the hill was shaped like a skull. Legend identified the spot as the burial place of Adam's skull.
23. They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it. This was a narcotic painkiller. Jesus refused it, choosing instead to bear the full weight of suffering for man's sin.
24. Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. This recalls the messianic prophecy of Ps. 22:19: "They divide my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots." Consider that this Psalm was written by David about 1000 years before Christ…It is interesting that the Basilica of St. Denys of Argenteuil, France is the repository of the garment thought to be this seamless robe. The relic's tradition goes back to the time of Charlemagne. It is regarded as an undergarment, an inner vestment. There are no tailoring marks and no connecting stitches either in its length or width. The color is described as a mixture of brown, red and purple, while some have indicated that it is the color of wine. The fiber was analyzed by Gobelins of Paris and they determined that it is animal in origin, that is, wool. It is a supple and light tissue, indicating that it was woven by a delicate hand, although in a manner that was primitive.
25. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him.
26. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews."
27. With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left.
29. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. By slandering and shaking their heads at Jesus, the angry crowd unwittingly fulfills the messianic prophecy from Ps. 22:7-8: "But I am a worm, not a man; the scorn of men, despised by the people. All who see me scoff at me; they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads."
30. save yourself by coming down from the cross."
31. Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes, mocked him among themselves and said, "He saved others; he cannot save himself.
32. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also kept abusing him.

33. At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. Luke's account tells us that it was an extended solar eclipse. The Old Testament associates such dreadful darkness with divine judgment on sin.
34. And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Jesus quotes the opening line of Ps. 22 in Aramaic. This Psalm forecasts both the Messiah's suffering AND HIS EVENTUAL DELIVERANCE. The full context of Ps. 22, in light of its hopeful outcome, rules out the possibility that Jesus succumbed to despair.
35. Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "Look, he is calling Elijah."
36. One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink saying, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down."
37. Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.
38. The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The huge ornate curtain was a magnificent embroidered veil whose four colors typified the four elements: white, purple, blue and red. It was 82 feet by 24 feet. It hung in the sanctuary in front of its most sacred chamber, the Holy of Holies. The meaning is clear: access to the Father is now open through Jesus, who as high priest has entered on our behalf. Moreover, as the curtain ripped from TOP TO BOTTOM, the barrier between the face of God and his people was removed, and the termination of the Old Covenant was prophetically announced.
39. When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" A centurion was a Roman commander of 100 soldiers. This non-Jewish soldier was the only one to profess faith in the "King of the Jews" at the Cross.
40. There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome. Mary, from the town of Magdala, is probably the same as the woman out of whom Jesus drove seven devils but is not the same as the sinner mentioned in Luke. This was one of the women who ministered to the needs of Jesus during his public years. Mary, the mother of the younger James and of Joses might be the wife of Clopus, who was the brother of St. Joseph and that would make her Mary's sister-in-law. Salome, the mother of Zebedee's sons is probably the same person identified in John as Mary's sister. These women give us a wonderful example of the art of "standing by" both for the sake of Jesus and for the sake of his Mother.
41. These women had followed him when he was in Galilee and ministered to him. There were also many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.
42. When it was already evening, since it was the day of preparation,
43. the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a distinguished member of the council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God, came and courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Joseph was a wealthy member of the Jewish Sanhedrin and according to Luke, he withheld his consent from the court's condemnation of Jesus. His courage as a disciple of Jesus helped him to arrange the burial and so risk his reputation as a respected leader in Israel. Joseph had a new tomb that had never been used and it was just 22 yards from Golgotha. Pilate gave permission for Jesus to be buried there.

44. Pilate was amazed that he was already dead. He summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus had already died.
45. And when he learned of it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.
46. Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down, wrapped him in the linen cloth, The shroud of Turin which is believed to be this cloth, is 14.3 feet long and 3.7 feet wide. It is marked with the full length image of a crucified man who was 30 to 35 years of age, approximately 5'11" in height and weighed about 175 pounds. and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. The Sabbath was very close now. There was not time to wash or properly to anoint the body. The hundred pounds of spices that Nicodemus had bought were quickly packed tight around the body to help preserve and freshen it despite the five great wounds and the many open lacerations from which some of his Precious Blood still seeped. The sun had set; in a moment the appearance of the first three stars would signal the beginning of the Passover Sabbath. The massive blocking stone was rolled in front of the entrance to the tomb. Under the Law, nothing more could be done until Sunday. Those who participated in his burial were showing their love for Christ and not their faith in his Resurrection.
47. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses watched where he was laid.

Some of the material for this commentary was taken from: (1) The Commentary Notes of Tim Gray, (2) "The Navarre Bible: Captivity Epistles," (3) "Dictionary of the Bible" by John L. McKenzie, S.J., (4) "The Jerome Biblical Commentary," (5) "Catechism Of The Catholic Church," (6) "The Founding of Christendom: Vol. 1" by Warren H. Carroll, (7) "Life Of Christ" by Fulton J. Sheen, (8) "Relics" by Joan Carroll Cruz, (9) "Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: The Letters of St. Paul to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon," With Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, (10) "Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: Mark" With Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, (11) "Ignatius Catholic Study Bible: Matthew" With Introduction, Commentary, and Notes by Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, (12) "The Navarre Bible: Mark", (13) "The Book Of Isaiah Chapters 40-66" by Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P., (14) "Workbook for lectors and gospel readers:1997" by Lawrence E. Mick, and (15) The St. Paul Center For Biblical Theology Online Founded By Dr. Scott Hahn.

In loving memory of Peg Schneller, who compiled these commentaries.