

Palm Sunday (B)

Gospel text (Mk 14,1—15,47): It was now two days before the feast of the Passover and Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the teachers of the Law were looking craftily for a way to arrest Jesus and put him to death; for they said, «Not during the Festival, or there might be trouble among the people».

Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper. As he was reclining at dinner, a woman entered carrying a precious jar of expensive perfume made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfumed oil on Jesus' head (...). Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went off to the chief priests in order to betray Jesus to them. On hearing him they were excited and promised to give him money. So Judas started planning the best way to hand him over to them.

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread (...), when it was evening, Jesus arrived with the Twelve. While they were at table eating, Jesus said, «Truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who shares my meal» (...). While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. And He said, «Take this, it is my body». Then He took a cup and after He had given thanks, passed it to them and they all drank from it. And He said, «This is my blood, the blood of the Covenant, which is to be poured out for many (...). After singing psalms of praise, they went out to the Hill of Olives (...).

They came to a place which was called Gethsemane and Jesus said to his disciples, «Sit here while I pray». But He took Peter, James and John along with him, and becoming filled with fear and

distress, He said to them, «My soul is full of sorrow, even to death. Remain here and stay awake». Then He went a little further on and fell to the ground, praying that if possible this hour might pass him by. Jesus said, «Abba (Daddy), all things are possible for you; take this cup away from me. Yet not what I want, but what you want» (...).

Judas, one of the twelve, came up. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, who had been sent by the chief priests, the teachers of the Law and the elders. The traitor had arranged a signal for them, «The one I kiss, he is the man. Arrest him and take him away under guard». So, when he came, he went directly to Jesus calling, «Master! Master!» and kissed him (...).

They led Jesus to the High Priest and all the chief priests assembled with the elders and the teachers of the Law. Peter had followed him at a distance and went right into the courtyard of the High Priest, where he sat with the guards, warming himself at the fire. Now the chief priests and the whole Council tried to find some evidence against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they were unable to find any (...). The High Priest then stood up in the midst of them and asked Jesus, «(...) Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?». Then Jesus answered, «I am (...)». The High Priest tore his clothes to show his horror and said, «What more evidence do we need? You have just heard his blasphemous words. What is your decision?». And they all condemned Jesus saying, «He must die» (...).

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the High Priest's servant-girls came by. Noticing Peter beside the fire, she looked straight at him and said, «You also were with Jesus, the Nazarene».

But he denied it (...), and began to justify himself with curses and oaths, «I don't know the man you are talking about». Just then a cock crowed a second time and Peter remembered what Jesus had said to him, «Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times». And he broke down and wept.

Early in the morning, the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the Law (that is, the whole Council or Sanhedrin) had their plan ready. They put Jesus in chains, led him away and handed him over to Pilate (...). Pilate asked, «What evil has he done?». But they shouted the louder, «Crucify him!». As Pilate wanted to please the people, (...) after the flogging of Jesus had him handed over to be crucified.

The soldiers took him inside the courtyard known as the praetorium and called the rest of their companions. They clothed him in a purple cloak and twisting a crown of thorns, they forced it onto his head (...). When they had finished mocking him, they pulled off the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. The soldiers led him out of the city to crucify him (...).

Then they nailed him to the cross and divided his clothes among themselves (...). It was about nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The statement of his offense was displayed above his head and it read, «The King of the Jews». They also crucified two robbers with him, one on his right and one on his left. People passing by laughed at him (...). When noon came, darkness fell over the whole land and lasted until three o'clock; and at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, «Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabachthani?» which means «My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?» (...). Jesus uttered a loud cry and gave up his spirit.

was torn in two from top to bottom. The captain who was standing in front of him saw how Jesus died and heard the cry he gave; and he said, «Truly, this man was the Son of God» (...).

Was Jesus a political revolutionary? (Controversy about Jesus' "Zelotism")

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)

(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, when reading the Passion, we deny the "zelotism" which the wave of "theologies of revolution" has tried to ascribe Jesus Christ to ("zealots" were in favor of "zealously" defending the law, even by force). In fact, San John—at the time of the cleansing of the Temple—clearly states that, when seeing Jesus' "zeal", the disciples remembered that it is written, "Zeal for your house will consume me".

But Jesus has transformed the "zeal" that "would serve God through violence" into the "zeal of the Cross"; thus He definitely established the criterion for true zeal—the zeal of self-giving love. Violence does not serve humanity, but inhumanity; violence in God's name is not His way: His zeal for the Kingdom of God took quite a different form.

—Only that authority which places itself under God's criterion and judgment can become a power for good. Jesus has this authority as the One who has risen. That means that this authority presupposes the Cross, presupposes His death.