Palm Sunday (B)

Gospel text (*Mk* 14,1—15,47): 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. They said, "Not during the festival, for fear that there may be a riot among the people."

When he was in Bethany reclining at table in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of perfumed oil, costly genuine spikenard. She broke the alabaster jar and poured it on his head... Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went off to the chief priests to hand him over to them. When they heard him they were pleased and promised to pay him money. Then he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread... when it was evening, he came with the Twelve. 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." ... 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." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many... Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives...

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch." He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, "Abba, Father,* all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will." ...

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. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them,

saying, “The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely.” He came and immediately went over to him and said, “Rabbi.” And he kissed him...

They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. Peter followed him at a distance into the high priest’s courtyard and was seated with the guards, warming himself at the fire. The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none... The high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus, saying, “... Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?” Then Jesus answered, “I am..." At that the high priest tore his garments and said, “What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?” They all condemned him as deserving to die...

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the high priest’s maids came along. Seeing Peter warming himself, she looked intently at him and said, “You too were with the Nazarene, Jesus.” But he denied it... He began to curse and to swear, “I do not know this man about whom you are talking.” 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.

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 said to them, “What evil has he done?” They only shouted the louder, “Crucify him.” So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd... after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort. They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him... 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...

Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each

should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left. Those passing by reviled him... At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 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 gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" ...

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

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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.