

Palm Sunday (C)

Gospel text (*Lk 22,14—23,56*): When the hour came, Jesus took his place at table and the apostles with him. And he said to them, «I was eager to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; for, I tell you, I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God» (...). Jesus also took bread, and after giving thanks, He broke it and gave it to them saying, «This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me». And He did the same with the cup after eating, «This cup is the new covenant, sealed in my blood which is poured out for you (...)».

After this Jesus left to go as usual to Mount Olives and the disciples followed him. When He came to the place, He told them, «Pray that you may not be put to the test» (...). As He was in agony, He prayed even more earnestly and great drops of blood formed like sweat and fell to the ground. When He rose from prayer, He went to his disciples but found them worn out with grief, and asleep. And He said to them, «Why do you sleep? Get up and pray, so that you may not be put to the test».

Jesus was still speaking when a group appeared and the man named Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He drew near to Jesus to kiss him, and Jesus said to him, «Did you need this kiss to betray the Son of Man?» (...). Then they seized him and took him away, bringing him to the High Priest's house. Peter followed at a distance (...). Meanwhile the guards were mocking and beating Jesus. They blindfolded him, struck him and then asked, «Who hit you? Tell us, prophet». And they hurled many other insulting words at him.

were the chief priests and the scribes, assembled again. Then they had Jesus brought before them, and they began questioning him: «Tell us, are you the Christ?». Jesus replied, «You will not believe if I tell you, and neither will you answer if I ask you. Yet from now on the Son of Man will have his seat at the right hand of the Mighty God». In chorus they asked, «So you are the Son of God?». And Jesus said to them, «You are right, I am». Then they said, «What need have we of witnesses? We have heard it from his own lips».

The whole council rose and brought Jesus to Pilate (...). Pilate then called together the chief priests and the elders before all the people, and said to them, «You have brought this man before me and accused him of subversion. In your presence I have examined him and found no basis for your charges (...). I shall have him scourged and let him go». But they went on shouting and demanding that Jesus be crucified, and their shouts grew louder. So Pilate decided to pass the sentence they demanded. He released the man they asked for, the one who was in prison for rebellion and murder, and he delivered Jesus in accordance with their wishes (...).

Along with Jesus, two criminals also were led out to be executed. There at the place called “The Skull” He was crucified together with the criminals, one on his right and another on his left. Jesus said, «Father, forgive them for they do not know what they do». And the guards cast lots to divide his clothes among themselves. The people stood by watching. As for the rulers, they jeered at him, saying to one another, «Let the man who saved others now save himself, for he is the Messiah, the chosen one of God!». The soldiers also mocked him and when they drew near to offer him bitter wine, they said, «So you are the king of the Jews? Free yourself!». For above him was an inscription which read, «This is the King of the

Jews» (...).

One of the criminals hanging with Jesus insulted him, «So you are the Messiah? Save yourself and us as well!». But the other rebuked him, saying, «Have you no fear of God, you who received the same sentence as He did? For us it is just: this is payment for what we have done. But this man has done nothing wrong». And he said, «Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom». Jesus replied, «Truly, you will be with me today in paradise».

It was now about noon. The sun was hidden and darkness came over the whole land until mid-afternoon; and at that time the curtain of the Sanctuary was torn in two. Then Jesus gave a loud cry, «Father, into your hands I commend my spirit». And saying that, He gave up his spirit (...).

Follow the Lord

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

(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today, at the beginning of today's Liturgy, the Church says us: "Let us follow the Lord". The following of Christ requires, as a first step, a reawakening of the desire to be authentic human beings and thus the reawakening of oneself for God. It then requires us to join the climbing party, in the communion of the Church. In the "we" of the Church we enter into communion with the "you" of Jesus Christ and thus reach the path to God. We are also asked to listen to the Word of Jesus Christ and to live it.

The Cross is also part of the ascent towards the heights of Jesus Christ, of the ascent to the heights of God. Just as in the affairs of this world it is impossible to achieve great results without self-sacrifice and hard work, so the way toward life itself, to the realization of one's own humanity, is linked to communion with the

One who ascended to God's heights through the Cross.

—The Cross is an expression of what love means: only those who lose themselves find themselves.