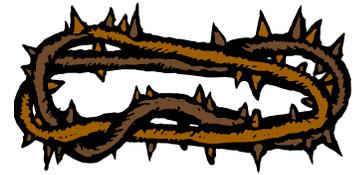


The Passion of Our Lord According to Saint Mark



The following dramatic reading of the Passion Story from the Gospel According to Mark was prepared from “The Message” by Eugene Peterson by the Rev. John Borthwick of Guelph, Ontario – St. Andrew’s Charge in 2003.

Narrator: Pam Shepp
First Reader: Ron Terbush
Second Reader: Dan Smith

Narrator: At dawn’s first light, the high priests, with the religious leaders and scholars, arranged a conference with the entire Jewish Council. After tying Jesus securely, they took him out and presented him to Pilate. Pilate asked him,

1st Reader: “Are you the ‘King of the Jews’?”

Narrator: He answered,

2nd Reader: “If you say so.”

Narrator: The high priests let loose a barrage of accusations. Pilate asked again,

1st Reader: “Aren’t you going to answer anything? That’s quite a list of accusations.”

Narrator: Still, he said nothing. Pilate was impressed, really impressed. It was a custom at the Feast to release a prisoner, anyone the people asked for. There was one prisoner called Barabbas, locked up with the insurrectionists who had committed murder during the uprising against Rome. As the crowd came up and began to present its petition for him to release a prisoner, Pilate anticipated them:

1st Reader: "Do you want me to release the King of the Jews to you?"

Narrator: Pilate knew by this time that it was through sheer spite that the high priests had turned Jesus over to him. But the high priests by then had worked up the crowd to ask for the release of Barabbas. Pilate came back,

1st Reader: "So what do I do with this man you call King of the Jews?"

Narrator: They yelled,

**Choir &
Congregation: "Nail him to a cross!"**

Narrator: Pilate objected,

1st Reader: "But for what crime?"

Narrator But they yelled all the louder,

**Choir &
Congregation: "Nail him to a cross!"**

Narrator: Pilate gave the crowd what it wanted, set Barabbas free and turned Jesus over for whipping and crucifixion. The soldiers took Jesus into the palace (called Praetorium) and called together the entire brigade. They dressed him up in purple and put a crown plaited from a thorn bush on his head. Then they began their mockery:

**Choir &
Congregation: "Bravo, King of the Jews!"**

Narrator: They banged on his head with a club, spit on him, and knelt down in mock worship. After they had their fun, they took off the purple cape and put his own clothes back on him. Then they marched out to nail him to the cross. There was a man walking by, coming from work, Simon from Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. They made him carry Jesus' cross. The soldiers brought Jesus to Golgotha, meaning "Skull Hill." They offered him a mild painkiller (wine mixed with myrrh), but he wouldn't take it. And they nailed him to the cross. They divided up his clothes and threw dice to see who would get them. They nailed him up at nine o'clock in the morning. The charge against him- **THE KING OF THE JEWS**- was printed on a poster. Along with him, they crucified two criminals, one to his right, the other to his left. People passing along the road jeered, shaking their heads in mock lament:

Choir &

Congregation: **"You bragged that you could tear down the Temple and then rebuild it in three days – so show us your stuff! Save yourself! If you're really God's Son, come down from that cross!"**

Narrator: The high priests, along with the religious scholars, were right there mixing it up with the rest of them, having a great time poking fun at him:

Choir &

Congregation: **"He saved others – but he can't save himself! Messiah, is he? King of Israel? Then let him climb down from that cross. We'll ALL become believers then!"**

Narrator: Even the men crucified alongside him joined in the mockery. At noon the sky became extremely dark. The darkness lasted three hours. At three o'clock, Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly,

2nd Reader: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"

Narrator: Which means,

2nd Reader: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Narrator: Some bystanders who heard him said,

**Choir &
Congregation: "Listen, he's calling for Elijah."**

Narrator: Someone ran off, soaked a sponge in sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying,

**Choir &
Congregation: "Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down."**

Narrator: But Jesus, with a loud cry, gave his last breath. At that moment the Temple curtain ripped right down the middle. When the Roman captain standing guard in front of him saw that he had quit breathing, he said,

1st Reader "This has to be the Son of God!"