**FIRST READING** Isaiah 50: 4-9a

A reading from the book of Isaiah

The Sovereign Lord has taught me what to say, so that I can strengthen the weary. Every morning he makes me eager to hear what he is going to teach me. The Lord has given me understanding, and I have not rebelled or turned away from him. I bared my back to those who beat me. I did not stop them when they insulted me, when they pulled out the hairs of my beard and spit in my face. But their insults cannot hurt me because the Sovereign Lord gives me help. I brace myself to endure them. I know that I will not be disgraced, for God is near, and he will prove me innocent. Does anyone dare bring charges against me? Let us go to court together! Let him bring his accusation. The Sovereign Lord himself defends me—who, then, can prove me guilty? All my accusers will disappear; they will vanish like moth-eaten cloth.

Psalm 31: 9-16

Be merciful to me, Lord, for I am in trouble; my eyes are tired from so much crying; I am completely worn out. I am exhausted by sorrow, and weeping has shortened my life. I am weak from all my troubles; even my bones are wasting away. All my enemies, and especially my neighbours, treat me with contempt. Those who know me are afraid of me; when they see me in the street, they run away. Everyone has forgotten me, as though I were dead; I am like something thrown away. I hear many enemies whispering; terror is all around me. They are making plans against me, plotting to kill me. But my trust is in you, O Lord; you are my God. I am always in your care; save me from my enemies, from those who persecute me. Look on your servant with kindness; save me in your constant love.

**SECOND READING** Philippians 2: 5-11

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Philippians

The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had: He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to remain[b] equal with God. Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant. He became like a human being and appeared in human likeness. He was humble and walked the path of obedience all the way to death— his death on the cross. For this reason God raised him to the highest place above and gave him the name that is greater than any other name. And so, in honour of the name of Jesus all beings in heaven, on earth, and in the world below and will fall on their knees, and all will openly proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**GOSPEL** Luke 23 1-49

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**Glory to you O Lord.**

The whole group rose up and took Jesus before Pilate, where they began to accuse him: “We caught this man misleading our people, telling them not to pay taxes to the Emperor and claiming that he himself is the Messiah, a king.” Pilate asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?” “So you say,” answered Jesus. Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, “I find no reason to condemn this man.” But they insisted even more strongly, “With his teaching he is starting a riot among the people all through Judea. He began in Galilee and now has come here.” When Pilate heard this, he asked, “Is this man a Galilean?” When he learned that Jesus was from the region ruled by Herod, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. Herod was very pleased when he saw Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been wanting to see him for a long time. He was hoping to see Jesus perform some miracle. So Herod asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus made no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the Law stepped forward and made strong accusations against Jesus. Herod and his soldiers made fun of Jesus and treated him with contempt; then they put a fine robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. On that very day Herod and Pilate became friends; before this they had been enemies. Pilate called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people, and said to them, “You brought this man to me and said that he was misleading the people. Now, I have examined him here in your presence, and I have not found him guilty of any of the crimes you accuse him of. Nor did Herod find him guilty, for he sent him back to us. There is nothing this man has done to deserve death. So I will have him whipped and let him go.” The whole crowd cried out, “Kill him! Set Barabbas free for us!” (Barabbas had been put in prison for a riot that had taken place in the city, and for murder.) Pilate wanted to set Jesus free, so he appealed to the crowd again. But they shouted back, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate said to them the third time, “But what crime has he committed? I cannot find anything he has done to deserve death! I will have him whipped and set him free.” But they kept on shouting at the top of their voices that Jesus should be crucified, and finally their shouting succeeded. So Pilate passed the sentence on Jesus that they were asking for. He set free the man they wanted, the one who had been put in prison for riot and murder, and he handed Jesus over for them to do as they wished. The soldiers led Jesus away, and as they were going, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon who was coming into the city from the country. They seized him, put the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large crowd of people followed him; among them were some women who were weeping and wailing for him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Women of Jerusalem! Don't cry for me, but for yourselves and your children. For the days are coming when people will say, ‘How lucky are the women who never had children, who never bore babies, who never nursed them!’ That will be the time when people will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Hide us!’ For if such things as these are done when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” Two other men, both of them criminals, were also led out to be put to death with Jesus. When they came to the place called “The Skull,” they crucified Jesus there, and the two criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. Jesus said, “Forgive them, Father! They don't know what they are doing.” They divided his clothes among themselves by throwing dice. The people stood there watching while the Jewish leaders made fun of him: “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah whom God has chosen!” The soldiers also made fun of him: they came up to him and offered him cheap wine, and said, “Save yourself if you are the king of the Jews!” Above him were written these words: “This is the King of the Jews.” One of the criminals hanging there hurled insults at him: “Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” The other one, however, rebuked him, saying, “Don't you fear God? You received the same sentence he did. Ours, however, is only right, because we are getting what we deserve for what we did; but he has done no wrong.” And he said to Jesus, “Remember me, Jesus, when you come as King!” Jesus said to him, “I promise you that today you will be in Paradise with me.” It was about twelve o'clock when the sun stopped shining and darkness covered the whole country until three o'clock; and the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Father! In your hands I place my spirit!” He said this and died. The army officer saw what had happened, and he praised God, saying, “Certainly he was a good man!” When the people who had gathered there to watch the spectacle saw what happened, they all went back home, beating their breasts in sorrow. All those who knew Jesus personally, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance to watch.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**