The passion narrative of John concludes the theme of this gospel, that Jesus who is truly man is also truly God. The evangelist was interested to show that Jesus was not at all helpless, in too much pain. He was not an ordinary human sufferer. He was God. John pictured him confronting Judas and soldiers sent to arrest him, without fear, and speaking firmly, he had these people under his control and always on the retreat. His words were powerful, spell-binding.

Even Peter’s betrayal was not given so much importance. Peter did not at all cry unlike in the gospel of Luke where he wept “bitterly” (Lk 22: 62). John did not play much importance on these betrayals because Jesus walked voluntarily from the garden of Gethsemane to the cross. He was there because he wanted to do exactly what his Father wished. There was no betrayal. Even the action of Judas lost its full impact when John presented that Satan took over his person during the last supper, therefore making him less free (Jh 13. 27). Judas was not in command of his senses, performing an action inspired by Satan and directed by his Father.

John, the writer of the last gospel, was interested in showing who Jesus was, that Jesus was the Son of God. John wanted that the early Christians should focus their attention on this mystery, that the person who died in the cross was God himself. His divinity did not at all diminish because throughout his passion and death, he was directing the drama. He was not pushed by anybody. His death was not only the way to his glory, but his death was itself glorious. His death was glorious because there was a total absence of fear and panic. He knew that from such evil, his Father would draw out something good and cause amazement to everyone. His last words, “It is finished,” are victorious, summing up his death as the culmination of the mission given to him by the Father.

The summit of Christian faith shines when people no longer struggle against death or do the most desperate thing in order to survive the worst sickness like cancer. It shines from the lives of people who welcome death and surrender themselves to God. Death comes for everyone, and is part of the cycle of nature. Jesus has come to teach that death is also a part of God’s will, that once all has been utilized to prevent death, there is something more glorious when one surrenders himself to God, telling him that his will be done.

The martyrs have Jesus’ attitude. St. Oscar Romero of El Salvador on receiving a death threat in 1979 told his would-be assassins that as a Christian he did not fear death. He did not also seek martyrdom because he did not want people to become murderers. But if God accepts the offering of his life, he would gladly give it to him. Those who killed him might not have done the crime if they understood the meaning of such words. Oscar Romero had surrendered his life to the Father. He would do his will as he wished, and his death was his passage to eternal glory.

— Fr. Tim Melliza, SSP
I say, “You are my servant, whom I have chosen, with whom my Spirit rests. I have put my Spirit upon him, that he may bring forth justice. He shall not quarrel or outcry in anger; he shall not be disobedient, nor speak嫌弃 my words. He shall eat with the palate of a bruised reed, and he shall drink the water of ashes. But he shall be like a calf before its herd, and like a lamb before its shepherds. The Lord will anoint him with the oil of gladness, and they shall call him a just servant. And he shall be exalted, and shall be lifted up, and shall stand upon the heights of the holy place; and he shall be exalted, and shall be lifted up, and shall stand upon the heights of the holy place. And he shall make many fall, and shall divide the spoils among the great, and he shall be lifted up, and shall be exalted. And many were astonished at him—so shall he startle the nations. He is like a shoot from the earth, and like a sprout from the dry ground. He has come to those who were in infirmity, and to those who were in the shadow of death, and to those who were in darkness and in the land of the dead, and to those who were in darkness and in a great shadow. And he shall bring out his understanding as the light, and the light of his glory as an enlightenment, and his exaltation shall be as a gospel.”

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 31)

R — Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

1. In you, O Lord, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame. / In your justice rescue me. / Into your hands I commend my spirit; / you will redeem me, O Lord, / O faithful God. (R)

2. For all my foes I am an object of reproach; / a laughingstock to my neighbors, and a dread to my friends; / they who see me abroad flee from me. / I am forgotten like the unremembered dead; / I am like a dish that is broken. (R)

3. But my trust is in you, O Lord; / I say, “You are my God. / In your hands is my destiny; rescue me / from the clutches of my enemies and my persecutors.” (R)

4. Let your face shine upon your servant; / save me in your kindness. Take courage and be stouthearted; / all you who hope in the Lord. (R)

Second Reading

(Hab 4:14–16; 5:7–9) (Sit)

Jesus agonizes at the prospect of his suffering and death but out of his deep reverence for the Father, he accepts his passion and gains salvation for us. Because he knows our experience of weakness, pain, and suffering, Jesus becomes our gentle and sympathetic intercessor before the Father.

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

BROTHERS and sisters:

Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who
is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has similarly been tested in every way, yet without sin. So let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and to find grace for timely help.

In the days when Christ was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered; and when he was made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

— The word of the Lord.
All — Thanks be to God.

Verse before the Gospel
(Phil 2:8–9) (Stand)

All — Christ became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every other name.

Gospel (Jn 18:1—19:42) (Stand)

(The Proclamation of the Gospel is read without candles and incense; the greeting and the sign of the cross are omitted.)

P — The Passion of our Lord
Jesus Christ according to John.
All — Glory to you, O Lord.

(The Gospel may be proclaimed by roles:
N — Narrator; J — Jesus; P — Pilate;
S — other male single speaker; M — maid;
C — crowd)

N — Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. Judas his betrayer also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas got a band of soldiers and guards from the chief priests and the Pharisees and went there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and said to them,

J — Whom are you looking for?
N — They answered him,
C — JESUS THE NAZOREAN!
N — He said to them,
J — I AM.

N — Judas his betrayer was also with them. When he said to them, “I AM,” they turned away and fell to the ground. So he again asked them,

J — Whom are you looking for?
N — They said,
C — JESUS THE NAZOREAN!
N — Jesus answered,
J — I told you that I AM. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.

N — This was to fulfill what he had said, “I have not lost any of those you gave me.” Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest’s slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave’s name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter,

J — Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?

N — So the band of soldiers, the tribune, and the Jewish guards seized Jesus, bound him, and brought him to Annas first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had counseled the Jews that it was better that one man should die rather than the people.

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Now the other disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered the courtyard of the high priest with Jesus. But Peter stood at the gate outside. So the other disciple, the acquaintance of the high priest, went out and spoke to the gatekeeper and brought Peter in. Then the maid who was the gatekeeper said to Peter,
N — Again Peter denied it. And immediately the cock crowed.

Then they brought Jesus from Caiaphas to the praetorium. It was morning. And they themselves did not enter the praetorium, in order not to be defiled so that they could eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and said,

P — What charge do you bring against this man?

N — They answered and said to him,

C — If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.

N — At this, Pilate said to them,

P — Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law.

N — The Jews answered,

C — We do not have the right to execute anyone. That is in order that the word of Jesus might be fulfilled that he said indicating the kind of death he would die. So Pilate went back into the praetorium and summoned Jesus and said to him,

P — Are you the King of the Jews?

N — Jesus answered,

J — Do you say this on your own or have others told you about me?

N — Pilate answered,

P — I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?

N — Jesus answered,

J — My kingdom does not belong to this world. If my kingdom did belong to this world, my attendants would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not here.

N — So Pilate said to him,

P — Then you are a king?

N — Jesus answered,

J — You say I am a king. For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.

N — Pilate said to him,

P — What is truth?

N — When he had said this, he again went out to the Jews and said to them,

P — I find no guilt in him. But you have a custom that I release one prisoner to you at Passover. Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?

N — They cried out again,

C — Not this one but Barabbas!

N — Now Barabbas was a revolutionary.

Then Pilate took Jesus and had him scourged. And the soldiers wove a crown out of thorns and placed it on his head, and clothed him in a purple cloak, and they came to him and said,

C — Hail, King of the Jews!

N — And they struck him repeatedly. Once more Pilate went out and said to them,

P — Look, I am bringing him out to you, so that you may know that I find no guilt in him.

N — So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. And he said to them,

P — Behold, the man!

N — When the chief priests and the guards saw him they cried out,

C — Crucify him! Crucify him! I find no guilt in him.

N — The Jews answered,

C — We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

N — Now when Pilate heard this statement, he became even more afraid, and went back into the praetorium and said to Jesus,

P — Where are you from?

N — Jesus did not answer him. So Pilate said to him,

P — Do you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?

N — Jesus answered him,

J — You would have no power over me if it had not been given to you from above. For this reason the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.

N — Consequently, Pilate tried to release him; but the Jews cried out,

C — If you release him, you are not a friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a king opposes Caesar.

N — When Pilate heard these words he brought Jesus out and seated him on the judge’s bench in the place called Stone Pavement, in Hebrew, Gabbatha. It was preparation day for Passover, and it was about noon. And he said to the Jews,

P — Behold, your king!

N — They cried out,
C — TAKE HIM AWAY, TAKE HIM AWAY! CRUCIFY HIM!
N — Pilate said to them,
P — Shall I crucify your king?
N — The chief priests answered,
C — WE HAVE NO KING BUT CAESAR.

N — Then he handed him over to them to be crucified.

So they took Jesus, and, carrying the cross himself, he went out to what is called the Place of Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle. Pilate also had an inscription written and put on the cross. It read, “Jesus the Nazorean, the King of the Jews.” Now many of the Jews read this inscription, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate,

N — Pilate answered,
P — What I have written, I have written.

N — When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four shares, a share for each soldier. They also took his tunic, but the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top down. So they said to one another,

C — LET’S NOT TEAR IT, BUT CAST LOTS FOR IT TO SEE WHOSE IT WILL BE.
N — That is in order that the passage of Scripture might be fulfilled that says: They divided my garments among them, and for my vesture they cast lots. “This is what the soldiers did. Standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple there whom he loved he said to his mother,

J — Woman, behold, your son.

N — Then he said to the disciple,

J — Behold, your mother.

N — And from that hour the disciple took her into his home.

After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said,

J — I thirst.

N — There was a vessel filled with common wine. So they put a sponge soaked in wine on a sprig of hyssop and put it up to his mouth. When Jesus had taken the wine, he said,

J — It is finished.

N — And bowing his head, he handed over the spirit.

(Please kneel for a few moments of silent prayer.)

N — Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and that they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out. An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may come to believe. For this happened so that the Scripture passage might be fulfilled: Not a bone of it will be broken. And again another passage says: They will look upon him whom they have pierced.

After this, Joseph of Arimathea, secretly a disciple of Jesus for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate if he could remove the body of Jesus. And Pilate permitted it. So he came and took his body. Nicodemus, the one who had first come to him at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes weighing about one hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and bound it with burial cloths along with the spices, according to the Jewish burial custom. Now in the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been buried. So they laid Jesus there because of the Jewish preparation day; for the tomb was close by.

— The Gospel of the Lord.
All — Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.
Homily (Sit)

Solemn Intercessions (Stand)

Introduction

C — In the celebration of the Word, we have been made aware that Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior, offered himself for all men and women. Dying on the cross, he drew and united to himself all peoples. Let us now bring before the Father the needs of the Church and the needs of all men and women in the world.

(After each invitation to pray, the priest and the assembly kneel for some moments of silence, and then all stand for the prayer.)

1. FOR HOLY CHURCH

L — Let us pray, dearly beloved, for the holy Church of God, that our God and Lord be pleased to give her peace, to guard her and to unite her throughout the whole world and grant that, leading our life in tranquility and quiet, we may glorify God the Father almighty. (Kneel, pause, stand.)

P — Almighty ever-living God, who in Christ revealed your glory to all the nations, watch over the works of your mercy, that your Church, spread throughout all the world, may persevere with steadfast faith in confessing your name. Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

2. FOR THE POPE

L — Let us pray also for our Holy Father Pope Francis, that our God and Lord, who chose him for the Order of Bishops, may keep him safe and unharmed for the Lord’s holy Church, to govern the holy People of God. (Kneel, pause, stand.)

P — Almighty ever-living God, by whose decree all things are founded, look with favor on our prayers and in your kindness protect the Pope chosen for us, that, under him, the Christian people, governed by you their maker, may grow in merit by reason of their faith.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

3. FOR ALL ORDERS AND DEGREES OF THE FAITHFUL

L — Let us pray also for Bishop N., for all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons of the Church and for the whole of the faithful people. (Kneel, pause, stand.)

P — Almighty ever-living God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is sanctified and governed, hear our humble prayer for your ministers, that, by the gift of your grace, all may serve you faithfully. Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

4. FOR CATECHUMENS

L — Let us pray also for (our) catechumens, that our God and Lord may open wide the ears of their inmost hearts and unlock the gates of his mercy, that, having received forgiveness of all their sins through the waters of rebirth, they, too, may be one with Christ Jesus our Lord. (Kneel, pause, stand.)

P — Almighty ever-living God, who make your Church ever fruitful with new offspring, increase the faith and understanding of (our) catechumens, that, reborn in the font of Baptism, they may be added to the number of your adopted children. Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

5. FOR THE UNITY OF CHRISTIANS

L — Let us pray also for all our brothers and sisters who believe in Christ, that our God and Lord may be pleased, as they live the truth, to gather them together and keep them in his one Church. (Kneel, pause, stand.)

P — Almighty ever-living God, who gather what is scattered and keep together what you have gathered, look kindly on the flock of your Son, that those whom one Baptism has consecrated may be joined together by integrity of faith and united in the bond of charity.

Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

6. FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE

L — Let us pray also for the Jewish people, to whom the Lord our God spoke first, that he may grant them to advance in love of his name and in faithfulness to his covenant. (Kneel, pause, stand.)

P — Almighty ever-living God, who bestowed your promises on Abraham and his descendants, hear graciously the prayers of your Church, that the people you first made your own may attain the fullness of redemption. Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

7. FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IN CHRIST

L — Let us pray also for those who do not believe in Christ, that, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, they, too, may enter on the way of salvation. (Kneel, pause, stand.)

P — Almighty ever-living God, grant that those who do not confess Christ that, by walking before you with a sincere heart, they may find the truth and that we ourselves, being constant in mutual love and striving to understand more fully the mystery of your life, may be made more perfect witnesses to your love in the world. Through Christ our Lord.

All — Amen.

8. FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT BELIEVE IN GOD

L — Let us pray also for those who do not acknowledge God, that, following what is right in sincerity of heart, they may find the way to God himself. (Kneel, pause, stand.)

P — Almighty ever-living God, who created all people to seek you, recognize the signs of your fatherly love and the witness
of the good works done by those who believe in you, and so in gladness confess you, the one true God and Father of our human race.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

9. FOR THOSE IN PUBLIC OFFICE

L — Let us pray also for those in public office, that our God and Lord may direct their minds and hearts according to his will for the true peace and freedom of all. (Kneel, pause, stand.)

P — Almighty ever-living God, in whose hand lies every human heart and the rights of peoples, look with favor, we pray, on those who govern with authority over us, that throughout the whole world, the prosperity of peoples, the assurance of peace, and freedom of religion may through your gift be made secure.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

10. FOR THOSE IN TRIBULATION

L — Let us pray, dearly beloved, to God the Father almighty, that he may cleanse the world of all errors, banish disease, drive out hunger, unlock prisons, loosen fetters, granting to travelers safety, to pilgrims return, health to the sick, and salvation to the dying. (Kneel, pause, stand.)

P — Almighty ever-living God, comfort of mourners, strength of all who toil, may the prayers of those who cry out in any tribulation come before you, that all may rejoice, because in their hour of need your mercy was at hand.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

11. FOR AN END TO PANDEMIC

L — Let us pray, dearly beloved, for a swift end to the coronavirus pandemic that afflicts our world, that our God and Father will heal the sick, strengthen those who care for them, and help us all to persevere in faith. (Kneel, pause, stand.)

P — Almighty and merciful God, source of all life, health and healing, look with compassion on our world, brought low by disease; protect us in the midst of the grave challenges that assail us and in your fatherly providence grant recovery to the stricken, strength to those who care for them, and success to those working to eradicate this scourge.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

PART II: THE ADORATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

C — We shall now venerate the cross of Jesus. From being a symbol of cruelty and shame, the tree of the cross now stands for the salvation of the world because of what Jesus suffered.

The Showing of the Holy Cross

(A minister hands the crucifix to the priest. The Priest, standing before the altar and facing the people, receives the Cross, uncovers a little of its upper part and elevates it while beginning the Ecce lignum Crucis (Behold the wood of the Cross). All respond: Come, let us adore. At the end of the singing, all kneel and for a brief moment adore in silence, while the Priest stands and holds the Cross raised.)

For each elevation:

P — Behold the wood of the Cross, on which hung the salvation of the world.

All — Come, let us adore. (Kneel)

The Adoration of the Holy Cross

(At the veneration of the cross, only the presider kisses the crucifix. Other ministers and those joining via live stream may be encouraged to kneel and observe some moment of silence for veneration. People may also venerate their crucifix at home.)

PART III: HOLY COMMUNION

(A cloth is spread on the altar, and a corporal and the Missal put in place. Meanwhile the priest, putting on a humeral veil, brings the Blessed Sacrament back from the place of repose to the altar, while all stand in silence. Two lighted candles accompany the Blessed Sacrament.)

The Lord’s Prayer

All — Our Father...
P — Deliver us, Lord...
All — For the kingdom, the power . . . (No sign of peace)

Invocation to Communion

(Kneel)

P — Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All — Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter . . .

Prayer after Communion

(Stand)

P — Let us pray. (Pause)

Almighty ever-living God, who have restored us to life by the blessed Death and Resurrection of your Christ, preserve in us the work of your mercy, that, by partaking of this mystery, we may have a life unceasingly devoted to you.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.

Prayer over the People

(For the dismissal the priest faces the people, extends his hands toward them, and says the following prayer.)

P — Bow down for the blessing. (Pause)

May abundant blessing, O Lord, we pray, descend upon your people, who have honored the Death of your Son in the hope of their resurrection: may pardon come, comfort be given, holy faith increase, and everlasting redemption be made secure.

Through Christ our Lord.
All — Amen.
Lord Jesus, help us to see in your Cross all the crosses of the world:

The cross of those who hunger for bread and for love;

The cross of those who are alone or abandoned even by their own children and family members;

The cross of those who thirst for justice and peace;

The cross of those who do not have the comfort of the faith;

The cross of the elderly who are bowed down under the weight of years and loneliness;

The cross of migrants who find doors closed because of fear, and hearts sealed by political calculations;

The cross of the little ones, wounded in their innocence and purity;

The cross of humanity that wanders in the darkness of uncertainty and in the darkness of the culture of the fleeting moment;

The cross of families broken by betrayal, by the seductions of the evil one or by murderous lightness and by selfishness;

The cross of consecrated persons who tirelessly seek to bring your light into the world and feel rejected, mocked, and humiliated;

The cross of consecrated persons who, along the way, have forgotten their first love;

The cross of your children who, believing in you and trying to live according to your word, find themselves marginalized and discarded even by their families and their peers;

The cross of our weaknesses, our hypocrisies, our betrayals, our sins, and our many broken promises;

The cross of your Church which, faithful to your Gospel, struggles to carry your love even among the baptized themselves;

The cross of the Church, your bride, who feels continually attacked from within and from without;

The cross of our common home that withers seriously before our selfish eyes that are blinded by greed and power.

Lord Jesus, rekindle in us the hope of the resurrection and of your definitive victory against all evil and all death. Amen.