

Holy Week

In these days, we may feel set apart from our Parish faith community, but we can be sure that the Holy Spirit draws us together in faith. We are one in Christ Jesus. We shall pass through this week together, united by His merciful love.

And as we accompany Jesus, we also carry the sufferings of our brothers and sisters in our world. We hold in prayer those who are suffering from the virus, those who have lost loved ones and those who are weighed down by loneliness and fear.

Palm Sunday

Jesus and his companions have travelled up to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover.

Scripture Reading:

The crowds who had come up for the Festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, they took branches of palm and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!...Hosanna in the highest heavens”.

These words echo in our minds today. It is a day to glorify God. Yet we know the chants will change all too soon. So, we place ourselves close to Jesus as he comes into the Holy City and we renew our faith in Him.

Lord, we pray that our faith in you may be strong and fearless. Fill our hearts with a sense of your presence and hold us fast in the days ahead.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, would have been among his companions as he enters Jerusalem. She is accompanying him in this final journey. We too, can stay close to His Mother in the days ahead. She will teach us how to put our faith in God and trust that he will always be with us.

Mary, Mother of Jesus and our mother also, we ask you to remain with us and with those we love. We want to learn from you how to listen to His word and to carry it out.

Holy Thursday – the first day of the Triduum

Jesus will celebrate the Last Supper together with his companions. It is especially difficult for us to be apart from one another on this great day of unity. But through the Word of God we can enter into the great mystery together. ‘Where charity and love are, there is God’.

We call to mind the image of Jesus getting up from table, putting a towel about his waist, and kneeling to wash the feet of his disciples. ‘What I have done, so you must do.’

He gives us his commandment to love and care for one another and to reach out to all in need of God’s love.

Scripture Reading:

On the same night that he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread, and thanked God for it and broke it, and he said, ‘this is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me.’ In the same way he took the cup after supper and said, “this is the cup of the new and eternal covenant in my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me”. “Until the Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death.” (1Corinthians)

This is a time of real closeness with the Lord. He has given himself completely to us and made a new covenant with us, that lasts for all time. We are united spiritually around the Lord’s table and renew our desire to be faithful to him.

When the meal is over, Jesus and a few companions make their way to the Garden of olives. Here Jesus prays to the Father ...he embraces God’s will. “Not my will, but thine be done”.

Meanwhile, the disciples sleep... and then the Temple guards crash into the silent space. Judas identifies Jesus with a kiss and then Jesus is led away.

So begins the long night of questioning, of torture and solitude. His body is broken; he is mocked and insulted; thrown into a hole.

“Without beauty, without majesty we saw him, no looks to attract our eyes. A thing despised and rejected by men”. (Prophet Isaiah)

We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you. By thy holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Words fail us as we look on the face of Jesus.

Good Friday

As the day dawns, Jesus is taken to Pontius Pilate. The gospel shows us a man uncertain what to do. The crowds have gathered, the priests are saying that he must condemn Jesus - what should he do?

In an attempt to pacify the priests, he hands Jesus over to his guards. They whip him with iron claws, dragging the skin from his back.

Finally they put a crown of thorns on his head – ‘ Hail King of the Jews’

When Jesus returns to Pilate the crowd begin to shout “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

Scripture Reading

“Then they took charge of Jesus, and carrying his own cross, he went out of the city to the place of the skull, or as it is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. Here they crucified him with two others, one on either side with Jesus on the middle.....

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his Mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother ‘Woman, this is your son. “Then to the disciple he said. “This is your mother”. And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his own home.

The death of Jesus was not an easy one... stripped and nailed to the cross, he would have slowly suffocated. Eventually, a soldier takes pity and plunges a spear into his side.

The body of Jesus is taken to a nearby empty tomb, owned by Joseph of Arimathea.

(The Gospel of John)

So a great silence descends upon us and the time of waiting begins.

Lord, may we give you safe keeping in our hearts. May your healing presence remove all that may hinder your presence.

Easter Sunday

We cannot gather in the darkness of nightbut we can light up our hearts with faith .

“A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me....”(psalm 50)

He is risen from the dead! Alleluia.

“After the Sabbath, and towards dawn on the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary, went to visit the sepulchre. And all at once there was a violent earthquake, for the angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His face was like lightening, his robe white as snow. The guards were so frightened they were like dead men. Then the angel spoke and said; “there is no need for you to be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen.! Tell the others he has gone before you into Galilee”.

Jesus is risen! He has defeated death and gathered us all into his living presence. We are renewed in Christ. By our baptism we entered into his death and were raised to a new life.

Our hearts are full of thanks and praise to you, O Lord, because you have called us to live a new life in you. Grant that we may always seek your face and serve you with a willing heart.