

From a Palm Sunday Homily of Pope Francis

The Gospel we heard before the procession (cf. Mt 21:1-11) describes Jesus as he comes down from the Mount of Olives on the back of a colt that had never been ridden. It recounts the enthusiasm of the disciples who acclaim the Master with cries of joy, and we can picture in our minds the excitement of the children and young people of the city who joined in the excitement. Jesus himself sees in this joyful welcome an inexorable force willed by God. To the scandalized Pharisees he responds: "I tell you that if these were silent, the stones would shout out" (Lk 19:40).

Yet Jesus who, in fulfilment of the Scriptures, enters the holy city in this way is no misguided purveyor of illusions, no new age prophet, no imposter. Rather, he is clearly a Messiah who comes in the guise of a servant, the servant of God and of man, and goes to his passion. He is the great "patient", who suffers all the pain of humanity.

So as we joyfully acclaim our King, let us also think of the sufferings that he will have to endure in this week. Let us think of the slanders and insults, the snares and betrayals, the abandonment to an unjust judgment, the blows, the lashes and the crown of thorns... And lastly, the way of the cross leading to the crucifixion.

He had spoken clearly of this to his disciples: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mt 16:24). Jesus never promised honour and success. The Gospels make this clear. He had always warned his friends that this was to be his path, and that the final victory would be achieved through the passion and the cross. All this holds true for us too. Let us ask for the grace to follow Jesus faithfully, not in words but in deeds. Let us also ask for the patience to carry our own cross, not to refuse it or set it aside, but rather, in looking to him, to take it up and to carry it daily.

This Jesus, who accepts the hosannas of the crowd, knows full well that they will soon be followed by the cry: "Crucify him!" He does not ask us to contemplate him only in pictures and photographs, or in the videos that circulate on the internet. No. He is present in our many brothers and sisters who today endure sufferings like his own: they suffer from slave labour, from family tragedies, from diseases... They suffer from wars and terrorism, from interests that are armed and ready to strike. Women and men who are cheated, violated in their dignity, discarded... Jesus is in them, in each of them, and, with marred features and broken voice, he asks to be looked in the eye, to be acknowledged, to be loved.

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LIVE-STREAM OF PASSION WEEK AND EASTER TRIDUUM

This is going to be a particularly difficult Holy Week and Triduum for many Catholics who cherish the celebrations which are the high point of the year. In Pope Francis' homily (see adjacent box), he calls on us to 'ask for the grace to follow Jesus faithfully, not in words but in deeds. Let us ask for the patience to carry our own cross, not to refuse it or set it aside, but rather, in looking to him, to take it up and to carry it daily'. What is the Cross we bear, the sacrifice thrust upon us, this year? The Lord can turn this time into a time of grace for us. Let us seek him in the circumstances, the aloneness with which, the people with whom we find ourselves this year. He is always with us; Good Friday leads to Easter Sunday.

The celebration of Palm Sunday Mass, the Chrism Mass, Maundy Thursday Mass, the Good Friday Passion of the Lord and Easter Mass will be live-streamed and can be viewed on the Archdiocese of Perth YouTube channel

www.youtube.com/user/PerthCatholicChurch/

www.perthcatholic.org.au

Palm Sunday Mass

Sunday, 5 April 11am

Maundy Thursday Mass

Thursday, 9 April 7pm

Good Friday Celebration of the Passion

Friday, 10 April 3pm

Easter Vigil Mass

Saturday, 11 April 6pm

Easter Sunday Mass

Sunday, 12 April 11am

EXPLORING THE WORD – PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD - YEAR A

1. GOSPEL MT. 27:11-54 - Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate, the governor, and the governor put to him this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' Jesus replied, 'It is you who say it.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him, 'Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?' But to the governor's complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charges.

At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over.

Now as he was seated in the chair of judgment, his wife sent him a message, 'Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him.'

The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor spoke and asked them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' they said 'Barabbas'. 'But in that case,' Pilate said to them 'what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!' 'Why?' he asked 'What harm has he done?' But they shouted all the louder, 'Let him be crucified!' Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said, 'I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.' And the people, to a man, shouted back, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged and then handed over to be crucified.

The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him. Then they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying, 'Hail, king of the Jews!' And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucify him.

On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him.

Above his head was placed the charge against him: it read: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said 'So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!' The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way. 'He saved others,' they said 'he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, "I am the son of God."' Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me!' When some of those who stood there heard this, they said, 'The man is calling on Elijah,' and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. 'Wait!' said the rest of them 'and see if Elijah will come to save him.' But Jesus again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

All kneel and pause a moment.

At that, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people. Meanwhile the centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said, 'In truth this was a son of God.'

2. FR SEAN'S REFLECTION - Service and love are at the heart of Passion week. The service and love of God's only Son which comes up against the hardness of the human heart, but which is not defeated by our hardened hearts.

The first reading comes from the Suffering Servant songs of Isaiah. These draw on aspects of Israel's tradition with its successes and failures to craft a portrait of a loyal disciple or servant of God who will finally, in God's good time, proclaim the truth about God and stay faithful to it no matter what. This loyal servant is one who is willing to learn from God and who is willing to suffer for the truth learned and not resort to violence despite rejection. True discipleship is about the fulfilment of God's purpose. It is not giving in to evil, but it is also not personal satisfaction such as may be gained by victory over one's enemies.

The early Christians saw such faithfulness in Jesus who did not want a victory over his enemies; he wanted the fulfilment of his Father's loving purpose. We read in Matthew's account of the Passion the absolute freedom with which Jesus goes to his death – the freedom of self-sacrificing love. All that will happen – the betrayal, the miscarriage of justice, the shedding of innocent blood: all this evil – is gathered up and overcome by an overwhelming act of divine love, foretold in the scriptures. And even as Jesus dies on the Cross there is already a hint of love's victory as the earthquake and opening of tombs foreshadows the resurrection.

We can find that hint in every situation though sometimes all we can see for the longest while is the Cross. But every situation is marked by the stamp of the Cross and the Resurrection because the crucified and risen Lord is present to us in every situation with the loving freedom which took him to the Cross for salvation of the world.

3. LIVING THE GOSPEL – What is our image of God? What words come to mind when you think 'God'? I think that Matthew's Passion invites us to think 'faithfulness', 'love', 'service'. Do we realise that we are most like God then, when we love and serve faithfully? When we love and serve even those who show us a hardened heart? God's Son continues to love and serve even when we reject his love and service; he continues to love and serve even when it leads to the Cross. The Cross speaks to us of God's faithful love and service in the face of inhuman cruelty.

4. QUESTION FOR REFLECTION AND SHARE

1. When do I find it difficult to love and serve?
2. What do I feel in the face of Jesus' loving and faithful service?

5. INTERCESSION - What would you like to pray to God for: The Church, the World, our local community, your family and friends, those who are ill, loved ones, friends who have died.

6. Pray the "Our Father" and then you may wish to make the sign of the cross on each other's foreheads.

The scriptural quotations are taken from the Jerusalem Bible, published and copyright 1966, 1967 and 1968 by Darton Longman and Todd Ltd and Doubleday & Co Inc, and used by permission of the publishers.

**PROJECT
COMPASSION**
GO FURTHER TOGETHER

Palm Sunday 2020

Dominic, 47 is a former teacher and father of six from Papua New Guinea. In 2016, he became involved with the Caritas Australia's Safe House and Family Anonymous programs and

turned a difficult life and an unhappy relationship around. The program provides gender-based violence prevention training, counselling services and safe accommodation for women and children survivors of violence. Now a community trainer, he works with other men to help them to change their behaviour and build more harmonious family lives. Dominic and his wife, Christophylda say that their relationship has been transformed – and their family life is now harmonious, happy and safe.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2020 to help support the Safe House project and help bring greater harmony to families in Papua New Guinea.

Let's Go Further, Together. You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phoning 1800 024 413.

 **Caritas**
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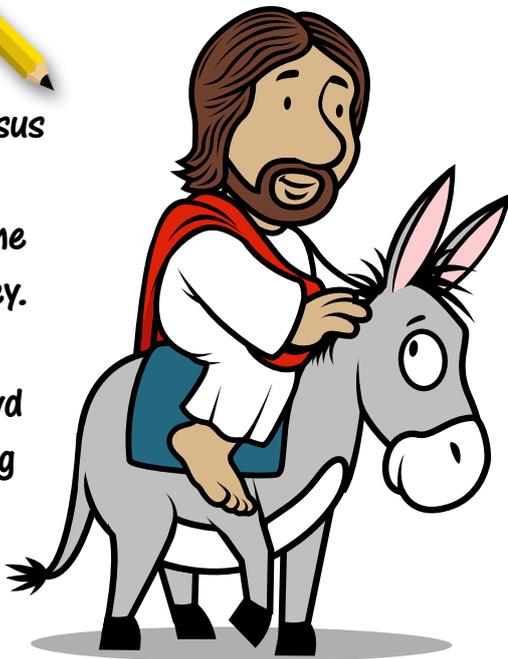


My name is



Hosanna! Hosanna!

A crowd of people came to see Jesus as he entered Jerusalem on the back of a donkey. Draw yourself amongst a crowd of people waving palm fronds at Jesus.



Draw or write what happened on each of these special days during Holy Week.



Palm Sunday



Holy Thursday



Good Friday



Easter Sunday



Hosanna!



Passion Sunday, Year A

PASSION SUNDAY

Write down what you know about the procession of palms.



HOLY THURSDAY

Draw Jesus and his disciples at the last supper.

GOOD FRIDAY

Draw the crowd watching Jesus.



Gospel Mt 21:1-11

When they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord has need of them," and he will send them immediately'.

This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying, 'Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass'.

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the ass and the colt, and put their garments on them, and he sat thereon. Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him shouted, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!'

And when he entered Jerusalem all the city was stirred, saying, 'Who is this?' And the crowds said, "This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth in Galilee."