



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

24th March 2024

Palm Sunday Of The Passion Of The Lord



Fr David Says.....

During this time of the year, especially on Good Friday as I see you, parishioners coming up in the aisle to venerate the Cross, I am deeply moved. I am moved because I have had the privilege to be invited by you to enter into your own tragic dramas of your lives. Seeing you coming up to venerate the Cross so focussed and with intent, you are identifying yourselves with the cross. Two human dramas are intertwined with each other. The Holy Week starting from Palm Sunday is a week of myriad of emotions. You cannot but be touched by the narrative of betrayal, suffering, pain, isolation, abandonment and crucifixion. Every human being can identify with some aspects of the narrative. The heart breaking tears do express the emotions of seeing an innocent gentle man being treated like a criminal. This year it is reminding us of the many sufferings of innocent people adults and children, men and women who are being treated unjustly both in the Middle East and Ukraine. We feel helpless in front of the enormity of pain and suffering which we witness on our TVs and social media. We are watching the crucifixion being re-enacted once again in the same land as that of Christ himself.

The story which begins on Palm Sunday is basically a human drama. It is our drama. As Jesus enters into his final week, he takes humanity with him and continues to do so every Easter. We are not just remembering an historical event that happened over two thousand years ago. We are celebrating and taking part in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as it happens today to us and for us.

His entry in to the city begins on a huge wave of optimism, joy and hope. The people line the streets, they wave palms, they put their cloaks and garments on the ground and they shout out his name. This was an ancient Roman Tradition used to welcome soldiers and armies home after their success in battle. The crowd welcome Jesus in a similar way as they shout out, Hosanna, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Yes how quickly the crowd changed and turned on Jesus. The same people who were happy to welcome him with shouts of joy, will soon begin to shout "Crucify him, Crucify him. Jesus is even betrayed and denied by his closest friends. The rest of them run and desert him. He is left alone.

Each of the four Evangelists give an account of the Passion, but each tells the story with his own particular style and emphasis. The account read this year is written by Mark, Peter's helper and companion in Rome and it shows the stark human abandonment of Jesus. The behaviour of the disciples is portrayed negatively. In the garden they fall asleep three times while Jesus prayed. Judas betrayed him while Peter with a curse denied any knowledge of him. All flee, Jesus's only words from the cross were "My God, my God why have you forsaken me." Even those plaintive words were met with derision. Yet as Jesus breathes his last, God acts to confirm his Son. The veil of the temple was rent in two, and the Roman Centurion confesses "Truly this was God's son". There are moments in our lives when we need desperately to cry out with Jesus: "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" only to find as

Jesus did, that God is listening.

Where am I in the unfolding drama that begins on Palm Sunday and plays out over Holy Week and which climaxes on Easter? Where am I as Jesus passes by on the donkey? Am I one of the crowd shouting out his name? Am I like Judas in any way? When have I betrayed others or Jesus? When like Peter have I denied knowing Jesus? Am I like Pilate when I judge and condemn others? Or am I like Simon or Veronica who help Jesus in his time of need? Having stood with the crowd shouting out his name and welcoming Jesus, will I stand with the same people spitting out insults as I shout "Crucify him! Crucify him"

There is great hostility in the story that we are hearing today – all of it directed against Jesus. There is the hostility of the chief priests, of the Roman soldiers, of those who passed by and jeered as he hung from the cross. Alongside the hostility of these who rejected Jesus, there is the failure of those who had been closest to him. His disciples deserted him and fled. Judas betrayed him and Peter denied him publicly. Yet, there were a few people who responded to Jesus in that dark hour faithfully and nobly. There was the anonymous woman who in an extravagant gesture of love and respect anointed the head of Jesus. Then there was the Roman Centurion, who looked on as Jesus died and exclaimed "This man was son of God", Joseph Arimathea took the bold step of going to Pilate to ensure Jesus had a dignified burial. The women disciples who looked on from a distance noted where Jesus was buried and went away to prepare spices to anoint his body at the earliest opportunity. All of these people men and women saw Jesus with eyes of faith and love.

The story we are going to listen to today, invites us to identify with those who saw Jesus with the eyes of faith and love, who recognised the light of God in the darkness of Jesus's passion and death.

This holy week the church invites us to travel that journey in a much slower pace, day by day as it were. We are invited to enter into the journey with the eyes of the anointing woman, the Centurion, Joseph Arimathea and the group of the faithful women. We look beneath the surface of what is happening, we listen deeply to all that is taking place, so as to recognize the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for us all, so that we might have life and have it to the full.

May this Holy Week 2024 find us renewed in zeal for the things of God, for love of God and neighbour, eager to celebrate next Sunday the Passover of the Lord, the central mystery of our Christian faith, the Resurrection of Christ.

Thank you for once again taking the time to read my reflection. May you have a great Holy Week. God bless you all.



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All the Masses being said at St James' will be live streamed
<https://www.churchservices.tv/pettswood>
For the protection of all attend St James we request that you do not video live Masses using your phone during services.
 You can also take part in Adoration and Benediction by live stream.
 All events for live streaming are listed on the streaming site.

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Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,
 or by appointment.

Palm Sunday Of The Passion Of The Lord Saturday 23rd March	06:00pm People Of The parish
Sunday 24th March	09:15am Doreen Hairs - 80th Birthday 11:00am Good Health & Welfare for Mrs Annette Coutinho Mr Arcanjo Furtado RIP (S Miranda)
Monday of Holy Week Monday 25th March	10:00am The Welfare of members of the CWL and their families (CWL)
Tuesday of Holy Week Tuesday 26th March	10:00am Fr David Camilleri & his Siblings (Hilary Marvell)
Wednesday of Holy Week Wednesday 27th March	10:00am Mary Casartelli 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Maundy Thursday Thursday 28th March	07.30pm Well Being of Charlotte Renolds (Helen Morgan)
Friday Of The Passion Of The Lord Friday 29th March	10:00am Stations of the Cross (Children) 11:00am Walk of Witness 3:00pm People Of The Parish 8:00pm Prayer around the Cross
The Easter Vigil In The Holy Night Saturday 30th March Easter Sunday Of The Resurrection Of The Lord Sunday 31st March	11:30am Swieconka - Blessing of the Easter Baskets 8:00pm Maureen Dillane RIP (J Dillane) 09:15am David Anthony Finn (Irwin Family) 11:00am Monica Gallagher - Birthday (A Bunnage) David, Michelle, Fiander & Family (Rowland Family)

Second Collections

This weeks second collection will be for the Parish Building Fund.
 The collection at the Masses over the Easter weekend are your personal offerings for your Parish Priest.
 A reminder that the 200 Club subscriptions renewals are now due.



The current needs for this week are for:

- UHT Milk
- Tinned cold meat
- Tinned Tomatoes
- Cooking Sauces
- Desserts, sponge puddings, jelly
- Bleach

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>