

## Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

5<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Today, Palm Sunday, is the start of Holy week when Our Lord entered Jerusalem with the crowds enraptured by joy and hope.

*'Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest heavens!'* (Mt 21:9b)



As we know this joy will soon turn to anguish on Maundy Thursday as Jesus prays utterly alone in the garden of Gethsemane. His prayer will simply be, '*Not my will but Your will be done.*' The rapturous welcome of the crowds in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday will become the angry cries of the mob on Good Friday, screaming '*Crucify him! Crucify him!*' On Holy Saturday there will be silence. The silence of the grave, the silence of darkness and loneliness. It would appear that many of the trials and challenges Our Lord faced are now echoing in our own present situation.

We have the opportunity to still be able to accompany Our Lord on his journey from Jerusalem to Calvary this year, despite the effects and changes caused by the Coronavirus. We may not be able to publicly celebrate the liturgies of Holy Week in church from waving palms to kissing the Cross, from the Washing of Feet to the Easter fire, but we can still accompany him in his Passion.

Palm Sunday the crowds in Jerusalem welcomed Jesus into their city. Let us start this Holy Week by copying the crowd and inviting Jesus into our lives, into our hearts. I will be celebrating Mass privately in church at 11am. Why not join me spiritually for this hour and read the Passion Gospel for Palm Sunday which this year will be Matthew 26:14 – 27:66. Or if you can't read it at 11am try to find another part of the day to do so. Why not avail yourself of the opportunity of one of the many live streamed Masses taking place on the internet. Sadly I've been informed that at St. Mary's we don't have the broadband capacity to do this. As Jesus entered the Holy city to shouts of '*Hosanna!*' let us welcome the Lord into our hearts at the start of this Holy Week so that we can feel close to him.

On Maundy Thursday we will witness Jesus washing the feet of his disciples and showing the example of true charity. Why not this Thursday pray for all those who are serving others from healthcare workers to those involved in food supply and distribution. Let us pray for those unsung heroes like neighbours looking out for each other and families supporting one another. I'll be privately celebrating The Mass of the Lord's Supper at 8:30pm in church and again I invite you to set aside an hour of prayer and join me spiritually. You may wish to read the Gospel which will be John 13:1–15.

Good Friday. Our Lord dies on the Cross taking all the sins of the world upon himself. You will find on the parish website the Stations of the Cross from our own church. Why not take time on this day to pray this beautiful devotion and see how much Jesus loves us. I will be praying the Good Friday Liturgy at 3pm in church. I invite you again to set some time aside and pray with me for those who have died because of the Coronavirus and those who are struggling and suffering because of its effects. I'm sure there will be plenty of live streamed services taking place that you are able to watch.

On Holy Saturday why not pick up your Rosary. It is such a simple and effective prayer, especially when meditating on the Passion of Christ in the sorrowful mysteries. Our Lady always brings us so close to her Son when we turn to her in this beautiful devotion.

I will be placing a box near the Tabernacle during Holy Week for prayers, petitions and thanksgivings. If you would like prayers being placed at this time before the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle then please do email me at [sean.obrien@dioceseofsalford.org.uk](mailto:sean.obrien@dioceseofsalford.org.uk) and if you would like me to pray with you then do ring the presbytery. I'll set aside Mon – Wed this week from 9:30am – 11:30am to answer calls and pray with parishioners.

The Coronavirus seems to have changed so much of our daily lives and routines but what it can't put a stop to is our faith. Please don't let Holy Week pass you by this year but see it as a time of hope and a witness to God's merciful and saving love. A love that is surely needed now more than ever.

God Bless and keep praying  
Fr. O'Brien