

THE SCRIPTURES THIS WEEK

PALM SUNDAY THE PASSION OF THE LORD

1ST READING: 1ST READING: ISAIAH 50. 4-7

The Lord promises that his suffering His Servant He will bring hope to His people, exiled in Babylon. He will listen to God, even though He will be despised. This prophecy probably first referred either to an individual representing the exiled people, or the people themselves. Now this prophecy finds its fulfilment in the crucified Christ.

Responsorial Psalm 22: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me."

2ND READING: PHILIPPIANS 2. 6-11

St. Paul probably took this hymn from an early baptismal liturgy and inserted it into this letter. His purpose was to tell us how we should imitate Jesus in His humble obedience to His Father's will. That reversed the damage to the human race caused by man's arrogant rebellion. Man, who fell through Adam's pride, was exalted through Christ emptying Himself of the divine glory to which He was entitled. Instead, He assumed the lowliness of a human slave, an executed criminal. He who had been brought so low is now exalted as Lord of heaven and earth.

GOSPEL: ST. MATTHEW'S PASSION 26. 14-27, 66

Writing principal for converts from Judaism, Matthew was concerned to show that Jesus had not come to destroy their God-given heritage, but to fulfil the promises He had made through the prophets. Matthew quotes them more than any of the other evangelists. This is very true of Mathew's Passion Narrative. These quotations stress that Jesus died on the cross in fulfilment of God's Messianic Promises and in obedience to His Heavenly Father.

At the beginning of Matthew's Gospel Jesus is called, 'Emmanuel,' 'meaning God with you;' while at the very end, the risen Lord promises to continue to be with us till the end of time. But on the cross Jesus experienced the helpless loneliness of feeling abandoned by God when He most needed His support. The Emmanuel theme reaches its climax when the risen Lord instructed His followers to preach to the whole world.

The theme of 'God being with us' raises the question, are we with God? Matthew most sharply contrasts the change in attitude to Jesus during His ministry and then His Passion. Peter who had acknowledge Jesus to be 'the Christ, the Son of the living God,' would make the most absolute denial, 'I do not know the man.' His follower would desert Him in His greatest need.

Matthew, more than any other evangelist, stresses that Jesus is the Son of God; that was recognised in Peter's profession of faith. Only in Matthew's Gospel, when Jesus was on trial under oath, does He accept the title of 'the Christ the Son of God.' Finally, the pagan centurion recognised Jesus, whom he had just crucified, as being the Son of God. He was the first fruits of Jesus' death.

Underlying Matthew's Passion Narrative there's a great paradox. The Almighty Son of God became the 'Suffering Servant of the Lord,' in order to save us from the power of sin and death. That's what St. Paul calls the 'folly of the cross,' which defies and transcends human reason.

NEXT SUNDAY –

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD (YEAR A)

"Our Lord needs from us neither great deeds nor profound thoughts.

Neither intelligence nor talents. He cherishes simplicity.

Saint Therese of Lisieux

Pope Francis

Evangelii Gaudium

The Joy of the Gospel

"Let me say this once more: God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy."

THE WORD AT WORK: OUR WEEKLY REFLECTION

PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

Palm Sunday is a mass of contradictions! It begins with a joyful procession of pilgrims entering Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, the feast commemorating God delivering His people from slavery in Egypt. In each annual celebration, God renewed His commitment to rescue His people from evil, and they renewed their commitment to be faithful to Him.

In one such group of pilgrims the crowd proclaims Jesus to be the son of David, who has come in the name of the Lord. They see Him as the promised Messiah who triumphantly enters the City of God to claim His kingdom. But Jesus comes, not as a warrior King, such as David, mounted on a war-horse, but as a peacemaker, such as His son, Solomon, mounted on a donkey. In His honour the crowds strew His path with their cloaks and with branches.

But then, what a contrast the liturgy provides in the proclamation of the Passion Narrative! It tells of Jesus not enthroned in majesty in the temple, but in shame on the cross. While His entry into the Holy City was joyful and triumphant, He was forced to stumble out of the city as a condemned criminal, carrying the cross on which He would be executed.

Christ's closest supporters, His disciples, had deserted him. Their leader, Peter, had thrice disowned Him. The crowd, which had enthusiastically proclaimed Jesus as king had turned against Him. True, they, the Jewish religious leaders and the Roman soldiers all called Jesus, 'King' Theirs was an expression of contemptuous mockery, not of loyal allegiance.

And yet they were all so right in calling Jesus 'King,' all so wrong in their understanding of His sovereignty. While the Jews had hoped for a leader who would deliver them from Roman occupation, Jesus had come to free the whole world from a far greater tyranny –that of sin and death. His weapons were not military strength and force of arms, but the power of His love. His kingdom was not territorial, but our hearts.

Far from being a defeated failure, nailed helplessly to the cross, it was there, on the cross, that Jesus was enthroned but as the conqueror of all the forces of evil arraigned against him.

As we begin Holy Week we are called to travel with Jesus. With the pilgrims waving their palms, we are called joyfully to welcome Jesus as the promised Messiah. As we do so, we must recognise that His kingdom is very different from any other. His is a kingdom of love, truth, justice and peace. If we are to enter that kingdom and share in Christ's victory, we must follow Him on the Way of the Cross to the glory of the resurrection.

That means we must die with Him to sin, if we are to rise with Him to share in His victory over sin and death. Only then will we sincerely welcome Christ as our king. Only then will we be His true subjects.

Do try to enter the spirit of Holy Week by coming to its services.

Isidore O.P.



HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH

SUNDAY 9 APRIL 2017

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD, (HOLY WEEK)

· A ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH · THE DOMINICAN PRESENCE IN LEICESTER SINCE 1247 ·

FROM THE PRIOR'S DESK

And so we arrive at the beginning of the greatest week in the Church year. Everything that we do leads us to this great series of celebrations, and everything that we are - as baptised Christians, as a community, as members of the universal Church - is echoed in the week ahead.

This year we have been a little thinner on the ground than we might prefer. Our Holy Week therefore is an opportunity to pray for the growth of the Dominican Order and of the Church, and to be in solidarity with fellow Christians who are prevented from the support of their ministers and of gathering together with ease. We also remember in a special way the sick and housebound of our community, those in hospital, and our prisoners.

Please take note of the timetables over Holy Week and Easter. Soon we will be planning together for the events that mark our summer term. The Priory is all a little untidy at present, as we prepare rooms for our new arrivals in the summer months. We have received a beautiful hand-drawn image of the Divine Mercy, which will be the focal point of our celebrations of Divine Mercy Sunday, and the Novena of Mercy which begins on Good Friday. The Image was drawn by one of our prisoners. Please take the leaflets and join in praying the Novena of Mercy.

We are very grateful for your kind support at this time. Be intent on prayer, and all that may happen will turn to our good.

Fr David

HOLY WEEK AND THE EASTER TRIDUUM 2017

Since we are a smaller community this year, there will be some differences to the way we will celebrate the Sacred Triduum. On Monday and Tuesday we will have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 6:15pm, with Mass at 7:15pm. On Wednesday there is no Mass, as each priest celebrates Mass with the Bishop at the Chrism Mass in Nottingham. Please take note of the arrangements below and keep them to hand. Let us pray for a prayerful Holy Week together.

Monday and Tuesday - Masses at 8am; 12:30pm; 7:15pm.

Wednesday - Chrism Mass at 11:30am (Nottingham Cathedral), no Mass at Holy Cross. Stations of the Cross at 12:30pm, Holy Hour 7:15pm.

Maundy Thursday - Mass of the Lord's Supper 7:30pm.

Good Friday - Tenebrae 9am, Passion Service 3pm, Stations at 7pm;

Holy Saturday - Tenebrae 9am, Easter Vigil at 8pm.

The Sacrament of Confession will be celebrated Monday - Wednesday before and after all Masses and services. Many thanks to all those who are helping with the various arrangements.

NOTICE BOARD

BAPTISM PREPARATION

If you wish to have your child baptised, please attend one of our baptism preparation sessions. The next is Sunday 2 April after the 10:30am Mass in St Clement's Hall.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CONFIRMATION

Please get in touch with the Priory Office if members of your family wish to celebrate these sacraments.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Couples who are preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony should make an appointment with the Parish Priest in the first instance.

BECOMING CATHOLIC

Any adult who wishes to become a Catholic or receive Confirmation should join our RCIA programme, which begins in the Autumn Term.

VISITING THE SICK

The Faithful who are sick and housebound can arrange a visit from a priest or special minister by calling 0116 252 1501.

FAMILY VISITS

Families who would like a house blessing or a pastoral visit at home, can make arrangements by calling 0116 252 1501

MARCH FOR LIFE IN BIRMINGHAM – 20TH MAY

A coach will depart **Holy Cross Church**, Wellington Street, Leicester at **8.00 am** on **Saturday 20th May** for Birmingham to celebrate the annual **March for Life**, we will arrive in time for Mass at St Chad's Cathedral at 10 am, followed by LifeFest in the centre of Birmingham, with a host of speakers and stalls, followed by the March. We depart for Leicester at 4.30 pm. Each year this important pro-life rally grows in size due to more and more people realising that great graces can be won by cherishing the lives of our precious unborn infants. Please contact the office at Holy Cross to book your place. Cost: £10 adults, under-14s free.

SOCIAL NEWS

On the weekend of May 6 and 7 - we are planning events after the vigil Mass and all the Sunday Masses and will be launching this year's Blackfriars' Market Raffle. Details to follow.

VISIT OF THE NATIONAL PILGRIM VIRGIN OF OUR LADY OF FATIMA

The Statue will visit on 1 June, after Easter we will start to make preparations for the visit. A Solemn Mass to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Apparitions, and in thanksgiving for the Canonisations of St Francisco and St Jacinta, will be celebrated on Saturday 13 May at 12:30pm in our church.

DOMINICAN PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM

This year on Sunday 14 May, leaving the Priory at 8am. Cost will be £15. Please join us for what is always a beautiful occasion and a wonderful way to mark Our Lady's month.

EASTER WEEK AND DIVINE MERCY NOVENA

There will only be one Mass each day in Easter Week at 12:30pm. The Church will remain open for the afternoons so that the faithful can pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy before the Image of Mercy in the Church. Divine Mercy Devotions will take place at 3pm on Divine Mercy Sunday, and the Image will be blessed. This year, we will bless a new Image of Mercy, hand drawn in pencil for our Priory by one of our parishioners in HMP Leicester.

GIFT AID ENVELOPES

For the coming year, these are available for those on the envelope scheme for regular church giving. More details on finance after Christmas.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- No Holy Hour on Easter Day. Rosary and Vespers at 6pm.
- Organ recitals, first Friday of each month at 1:15pm

THE DOMINICAN COMMUNITY

Fr David Rocks OP PP *Prior*; Fr Isidore Clarke OP;

Fr Fabian Radcliffe OP; Fr Robert Gay OP CC *Subprior*, *Bursar*.

Office Administrator: *Mrs Rachael Powell* – leicester.admin@english.op.org

Lay University Chaplain: *Mr George Ralph* – george.ralph@english.op.org

Director of Music: *Mr Thomas Keogh* – thomas@thomaskeogh.co.uk

For the Office Administrator, please call **0116 252 1501**

Holy Cross Priory, 45 Wellington Street, LE1 6HW. Tel: 0116 252 1501

For more details, visit: www.holycrossleicester.org

MASS TIMES

Sundays:

8am; 10:30am (sung);
12:30pm (old rite);
7pm

Weekdays:

8am (old rite);
12:30pm; 6:10pm

Saturdays:

8am (old rite);
10am; 12.30pm;
6:10pm Vigil Mass for Sunday

CONFESSION

Saturdays:

10:30-11:30am
5:00-6:00pm

MONEY MATTERS

Last week's collections:

£ 1692.12

(Gift aided: £ 624.50)

Second Collection –
South Sudan

£217.50

Woodhouse Collection

No Collection

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT!*