

'THE HOLY WEEK JOURNEY DURING COVID-19'
Palm Sunday ~ 5 April 2020



He wept over it | Eneique Simonet c. 1892 | public domain

We are invited to celebrate the holiest week of the Christian year. We begin by remembering the **unexpected** – the crowd welcomes Jesus with palm branches one day (Palm Sunday) and several days later they desert him as he suffers intensely and dies on the cross (Good Friday). And on Easter Sunday, Jesus rose from death to life.

During this week, we ponder how we can save lives by social distancing and other health precautions.

We reflect on adapting to the unexpected, to protect our community and our ourselves during the Pandemic.

LIVESTREAMED FROM YOUR CHURCH – GOOD FRIDAY & EASTER SUNDAY

We accompany Jesus as a community of faith, hope and love this week by livestreaming some of our church services and praying at home. Jesus journeys with us throughout the week ahead.

By livestreaming to your home from your church, we will join together in prayer for the *Good Friday* Ceremony 3pm and *Easter Sunday* Mass at 9am.

SIMPLE PRAYER SERVICE FOR USE AT HOME ON HOLY THURSDAY

I will celebrate our *Holy Thursday* Mass in our **closed** church for your intentions. A simple prayer liturgy for use at home for Holy Thursday will be emailed early this week and posted mid-week on our social media. On Holy Thursday evening, Jesus instituted the Eucharist at the Lord's Supper and washed the feet of the disciples as a sign of service. Since we won't be washing feet at Mass this year, may each of us choose a way of service appropriate to this time.

EASTER SUNDAY RENEWAL OF OUR BAPTISMAL PROMISES

In the livestreamed Easter Sunday Mass, we renew our baptismal promises as a family,

we celebrate the creativity of God's love, and in solidarity, we pray for our world. Through our parish social media, we will be updated on the liturgies to come.

[HOME PRAYER EXPERIENCE](#)

We have the opportunity to pray twice a day from home over the next 14 days as we adjust to the challenges of home isolation. Beginning today, the links will be provided daily. We pray for others over the next 14 days of Holy Week and Easter Week. We place our requests before God. We learn more about ourselves during the prayerful reflections provided online. We invite Jesus into our workplaces, into our homes and into working from home.

Let us now listen to the reflection of Pope Francis as he prepares us for Holy Week.
Fr Gerry

[MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS THIS HOLY WEEK](#)

Dear friends, good evening! This evening I have the chance to enter your homes in a different way than usual. If you allow me, I would like to have a conversation with you for a few moments, in this time of difficulty and of suffering. I can imagine you in your families, living an unusual life to avoid contagion. I am thinking of the liveliness of children and young people, who cannot go out, attend school, live their lives. I have in my heart all the families, especially those who have a loved one who is sick or who have unfortunately experienced mourning due to the coronavirus or other causes. These days I often think about people who are alone, and for whom it is more difficult to face these moments. Above all I think of the elderly, who are very dear to me.

I cannot forget those who are sick with coronavirus, people who are in hospital. I am aware of the generosity of those who put themselves at risk for the treatment of this pandemic or to guarantee the essential services to society. So many heroes, every day, at every hour! I also remember how many are in financial straits and are worried about work and the future. A thought also goes out to prison inmates, whose pain is compounded by fear of the epidemic, for themselves and their loved ones; I think of the homeless, who do not have a home to protect them.

It is a difficult time for everyone. For many, very difficult. The Pope knows this and, with these words, he wants to tell everyone of his closeness and affection. Let us try, if we can, to make the best use of this time: let us be generous; let us help those in need in our neighbourhood; let us look out for the loneliest people, perhaps by telephone or social networks; let us pray to the Lord for those who are in difficulty in Italy and in the world. Even if we are isolated, thought and spirit can go far with the creativity of love. This is what we need today: the creativity of love. This is what is needed today: the creativity of love.

We will celebrate Holy Week in a truly unusual way, which manifests and sums up the message of the Gospel, that of God's boundless love. And in the silence of our cities, the Easter Gospel will resound. The Apostle Paul says: "And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him Who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor 5:15). In the risen Jesus, life conquered death. This Paschal faith nourishes our hope. I

would like to share it with you this evening. It is the hope of a better time, in which we can be better, finally freed from evil and from this pandemic. It is a hope: hope does not disappoint; it is not an illusion, it is a hope.

Beside each other, in love and patience, we can prepare a better time in these days. Thank you for allowing me into your homes. Make a gesture of tenderness towards those who suffer, towards children, and towards the elderly. Tell them that the Pope is close and pray, that the Lord will soon deliver us all from evil. And you, pray for me. Have a good dinner. See you soon!

Fr Gerry

[Readings <https://universalis.com/Australia/20200405/mass.htm>]