

REFLECTION – HOLY WEEK 2016 - 20 MARCH 2016 - PALM SUNDAY

We begin the holiest week of the Christian Year this weekend with the outside ceremony of the PALMS, and process into the church for the Mass of the PASSION of Jesus.

We join with the wonderful parish choir for all the ceremonies this week.

At this weekend's 6pm and 7.30am Masses we reflect on our own lives and the difference that Jesus makes. We are telling the story of God's love for us all.

At the 9am Mass we gather the CHILDREN together twice, for the Palm Sunday Procession into the Church, and up near the Table of God's Word for the Gospel, homily and Prayers of the Faithful. The homily involves a dialogue with the children on the meaning and events of Holy Week. It is wonderful to hear the insights of children about God's love for us. Sometimes they are very joyful. In the afternoon, there is a prayer time in a bush setting for those adults preparing for baptism at Easter.

Already, St John Fisher College celebrated a full school Mass on Friday in preparation for this weekend.

The children at St Joseph's School reflected on Easter as part of their prayer day for the feast of St Joseph.

This week, St Joseph's School will celebrate each stage of Holy Week in prayer, preparing for the Triduum.

Some of the State Schools commemorate with an ecumenical liturgy or drama.

Other Christian schools celebrate in ways they choose.

On Tuesday night at 6.30 pm in our church, an ecumenical Aboriginal Holy Week service will bring the Triduum to prayer.

In our own lives this week, we reflect on the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We bring to prayer whatever is happening.

I bring to Jesus, the families of Carol and John, and pray for their families.

The funeral for Carol will be on Wednesday at Minjerriba, Stradbroke Island, and John's funeral on Thursday on the south side.

What is the TRIDUUM?

Our 3 celebrations of HOLY THURSDAY, GOOD FRIDAY and EASTER.

HOLY THURSDAY Mass at 7.30pm celebrates the gift of the first Mass of Jesus, in the upper room, on the night before he died.

We have a few people in the washing of the Feet, symbolising our call to service at the Eucharist.

After Mass, a time of prayer for those who can stay, remembering Jesus in the Garden of Gethsamene.

GOOD FRIDAY we prepare with Stations of the Cross at 9.30am.

And begin the SOLEMN ceremony at 3PM, the time when Jesus died.

We gather around the cross in groups, remembering.
Around the WORLD, the Solemn CEREMONY begins at 3pm.
In AUSTRALIA we have a traditional public holiday so that people have the opportunity to participate in a prayer service.

On HOLY SATURDAY night, we process from the Easter fire into the Church,
listen to a selection of readings from God's Word,
focus on Jesus as light to our world,
and celebrate our Eucharist.
During this Mass, new adults members are baptised, confirmed and receive Communion for the first time.
We pray the Creed of our beliefs. The water is blessed. The new Easter Candle is blessed.

On EASTER SUNDAY morning Masses at 7.30am and 9am, we renew our baptismal promises,
and commit ourselves to living as Christians in the Catholic Church.
We hear the story of the RISEN CHRIST and the early Christian community
and RECEIVE COMMUNION.

As Australians, in our parish we acknowledge the Aboriginal relationship to this land on which we live, and pay respect to Elders past and present.
Uncle David Miller leads the Acknowledgement on Palm Sunday 9am Mass,
and Mass Co-ordinators did the same at 6pm and 7.30am.
We continue our practice of several years,
of praying for our sister villages in South Sudan,
for the people of Iraq and Syria,
and our new intention for the people of Blackall in central Queensland.
We each bring our own prayers for our families and friends,
for our workplaces, schools, and interests,
for our neighbours, for those in need,
for those sick,
for those oppressed and lacking freedom.
for our country and our world,
for our common home planet EARTH.

We invite you to join with us in this HOLY WEEK
of PRAYER,
of REMEMBRANCE of what God has done for us and
of our deep GRATITUDE to God.

We CELEBRATE GOD'S LOVE.
We SHARE GOD'S JOY.

Come share with us.
Come live the Good News of Jesus.

[Fr. Gerry Hefferan – Reflection – Holy Week 2016 - 20 March 2016 – Palm Sunday]
[Readings: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/032016.cfm>]