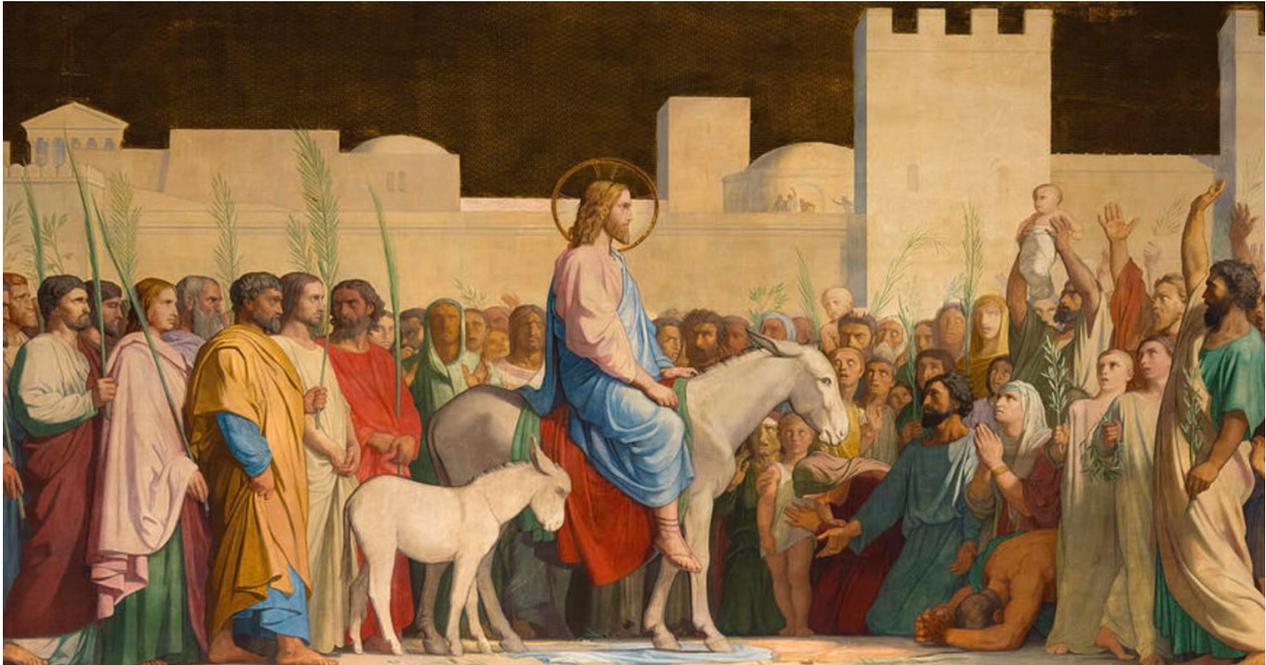


A SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FOR EACH OF US THIS HOLY WEEK

HOLY WEEK – 28 MARCH 2021



The Entrance of Christ into Jerusalem by Jean-Hippolyte Flandrin | public domain

CELEBRATING BAPTISMS

Yesterday we celebrated the baptisms of Thomas and Paige and Mitchell. Congratulations to all the families and the newest members of the church community.

TWO HOMILIES

Today there are two homilies –

The [first](#) is the brief spoken homily given at all weekend Masses and on Monday 9am. It is about forgiveness and gratitude. It is not recorded here.

The [second](#) homily is the written one below, offering a spiritual exercise over several days during Holy Week. Let us now enter into the exercise.

WE PAUSE AND REFLECT

Let us pause and ponder how our Lenten journey has gone, as we enter *Holy Week*.

We ask God's forgiveness of our failings.

We pause and quietly name our sins to God, including our sins of commission – our sinful actions and our sins of omission – by our failure to act.

[Pause]

We ask God's blessing on people who have uplifted us in spirit this Lent. We ask God's blessing upon our families and parish community.

We thank God for the fruit of the Spirit
which we witnessed in our own lives since Ash Wednesday.

Each one of us is now invited to recall a recent story
that contains a burden, a call to prayer and a joyful surprise
as God works through the goodness of others.

[Pause for a few moments & record a recent true story]

A PERSONAL EXAMPLE

I will now share a recent story for me.

Members of the Evangelisation Team, Deacons, Seminarians and Priests
of the Brisbane Archdiocese gathered for a Convocation on Wednesday and Thursday.
Important issues were discussed.

+ Energy & Prayer

I was aware that I did not have the energy I once had,
and with such crucial issues to ponder,
I turned to God in prayer,
asking God to show me how to use the energy that I do have.

I named in prayer, several large issues we face in the church
and staying in prayer, I felt the burden – a heavy burden.

Then I asked God to show me the way forward.

+ South Sudan Water Wells Projects & COVID-19

Due to our parish relationship with villages and water well projects,
I had been following the delays and difficulties over past weeks about news
of the arrival of the first batch of COVID vaccine in South Sudan.

When would it arrive? Would it arrive at all? Would it arrive safely?

And concern about the local hospital that services the villages that we support with water wells.

The local hospital staff finally received testing kits recently and some staff were found to be
COVID asymptomatic.

COVID came in addition to poverty, insecurity, TB, HIV and other pressing issues.

So South Sudan villages, the hospital, the mission centre and our parish partners have been an
important part of Lenten prayer.

Keeping in contact with them, and with a member of the UN Team has been a part of Lent 2021.

+ South Sudan & COVID-19 Vaccine Surprise

Then came the surprise - news on Thursday,
that 132,000 COVID vaccine doses had finally arrived in South Sudan.

The health teams would be vaccinated first.

Another 732,000 doses are expected over the next few months.

I experienced such deep rejoicing. Such a blessing.

I gave thanks to God for the goodness of people who persevered,

and enabled the vaccine to arrive.

The prayer moved me to thank God for the goodness in people around the world.

Suddenly the burden I had felt on Wednesday and Thursday at the Convocation was no longer a heavy burden.

The issues are still large, but not a heavy burden to me.

God will show us the way forward.

The Holy Spirit has been showing us the way forward for so long.

We listen and listen and listen, and we respond through the grace of God.

Each of us today is invited to call on the *Holy Spirit* to show us the way forward.

[Pause & pray]

REFLECTING ON THE PALM & PASSION | AN INVITATION

This Sunday we reflect on both the *Palm* and the *Passion*.

We take the time to ask what each of the dot points below, mean for us in our lives now.

The first dot points are about the first Gospel today.

A question is asked after each dot point.

The second Gospel today about the passion of Jesus has a longer list of dot points, but there are no questions provided with the points.

Each one of us is invited on Monday and Tuesday this week to read the longer Gospel and provide a question for each dot point.

Then on Wednesday and Thursday we could reflect on each of our questions, and humbly hand them over to God.

PALM SUNDAY GOSPEL - MARK 11:1-10

The short Gospel reading is on the Palm Procession by Jesus into Jerusalem.

We think of four points.

- Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of the king, **humble**, riding on a colt –

Question - what image of humility is true for you in your life?

- Jesus procession with many people in front and behind Jesus –

Question - do we find ourselves following Jesus, or do we expect Jesus to follow us?

- The people acclaimed Hosanna –

Question - do we give daily praise to God?

- the crowd proclaimed Jesus: *“Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord.”*

Question - do we affirm and pray for people in our lives who faithfully live their lives in the name of Jesus?

GOSPEL OF THE PASSION OF JESUS - MARK 14:1-15, 47

The long Gospel reading on the passion and death of Jesus includes:

- Anointing of the head of Jesus by a woman with an alabaster jar – Jesus says of her “she has done what was in her power to do”

My Question -

- Preparation for the Passover

My Question -

- The Gift of the Eucharist at the Lord’s Supper

My Question -

- Way to the Mount of Olives with Jesus predicting Peter will deny him.

My Question -

- Prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

“Abba! Everything is possible for you. Take this cup away from me. But let it be as you, not I, would have it.”

My Question –

- The arrest of Jesus and the role of Judas

My Question -

- Jesus before the high priest, the chief priests, the scribes and elders assembled

My Question -

- Peter disowns Jesus three times and “he burst into tears”

My Question -

- Jesus before Pilate

My Question -

- Choice to release the guilty (Barabbas) or the innocent (Jesus)

My Question -

- Scourging of Jesus, ridiculing Jesus and crown of thorns

My Question -

- Simon of Cyrene co-opted to help carry the cross

My Question -

- Placing of sign ‘The King of the Jews’

My Question -

- Passion (Suffering)

My Question –

- Crucifixion

My Question -

- Jeering at Jesus

My Question -

- Death of Jesus

My Question -

- Signs: Temple veil split.

My Question -

- Centurion makes a partial recognition of Jesus “In truth this was a son of God”

My Question -

- The naming of some of the Galilean women who were followers of Jesus

My Question -

- Joseph of Arimathaea “boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus”

My Question -

- The Burial of Jesus.

My Question -

- The presence of Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of Jesus, note where the tomb is.

My Question -

During this week, we have the opportunity to know ourselves better.

The *questions we write*, will tell us about our choices, our thinking and our faith.

We return in prayer on *Good Friday* and pray about the questions we have asked.

On *Easter Sunday* we rejoice together in the Risen Christ.

Let us pray.

Fr Gerry

Readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/032821.cfm>

Other information: [Sudan Sudan article on COVID-19 vaccines](#)