

ParishNews



Blessed Sacrament Parish Heavitree Exeter
5 April 2020. Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord. Year A



Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!

On Palm Sunday the long reading of the Passion dominates the celebration, and in a sense its meaning is obvious. Do not allow this, however, to detract from the other readings, which give the vital context necessary for understanding the Passion as more than just a long story. It is our story - the tale of how God achieved OUR salvation by the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

We continue with the different look Parish News this week. We want to make sure that we keep in touch in what is a strange and challenging time. Even though the public liturgical life of the parish is suspended we are still a parish family. If you have any stories or reflections about what's happening in the parish which we could share email: exeter-heavitree@prcdtr.org.uk

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Hope in a time of crisis

It's been another extraordinary week hasn't it? We are all coming to terms with living in lockdown and it's a challenge. Perhaps the most difficult thing I've found is the loss of routine, waking each morning (never my best time) and wondering, not what the day will hold, but what day of the week it is!

I'm sure you'll be experiencing something similar. The familiar rhythm of our lives has been upset and we need to rethink and set new objectives for each day, perhaps even for each hour. Being at home all the time can be a trial as well as a joy. Tensions rise, even within the most loving relationships, and these can cause hurt and upset. I'm used to living on my own, but even that has taken on a whole new meaning.

What this time has given us is the opportunity to reconsider our priorities. With many of the things we enjoy day by day now off limits, what have become the new priorities for us as individuals and as families? What are the things we really miss and what are the things which we've realised we can easily do without? Setting simpler, more achievable goals is never a bad thing.

You'd expect me to say this, but one thing I'm enjoying these days is the chance to pray more, and not just more but in a deeper more reflective way. After initially struggling to celebrate Mass on my own I'm now beginning to experience a new peacefulness and joy and a strengthening of my relationship with the Lord. Don't worry, I still miss, more than I can tell you, gathering together with you all on a Sunday and I can't wait until we can do it again, but in the meantime the Lord has graced me with a sense of peace. I hope he will do the same for you.

And there is so much to pray for. On the last Friday we celebrated Mass together I placed the large crucifix, which normally stands near the confessional in the church, on the steps of the sanctuary. It has remained there ever since and has become for me a symbol of our suffering world. Not just the suffering of those who have contracted this wretched virus, although they are uppermost in our prayers, but the suffering of those whose lives have been turned upside down by the pandemic; families in our parish who have lost work and income; those who will now struggle to make ends meet; those who are anxious and afraid; those for whom isolation is a trial and certainly not a joy. We pray for them all. And we pray for and salute those who are selflessly helping to keep society going and those whose hearts and lives are dedicated to helping the sick and the dying.

As Christians we have a unique take on suffering. St Paul, in his letter to the Romans teaches that: *these sufferings bring patience, as we know, and patience brings perseverance, and perseverance brings hope, and this hope is not deceptive, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. (Romans 5:3-5).*

So let us be hopeful. Not the vague optimism that everything will be ok without the knowledge of whether or not it will be, but the hope that comes only from the Holy Spirit who draws us from darkness into light, the truth that all has been redeemed and renewed by Christ's death on the cross.

Bishop Mark, in his letter for the beginning of Holy Week speaks of this time as a long Good Friday. However long it may be, the Friday of the Lord's Passion and Death leads only to the glory of Easter Sunday and the Resurrection of Jesus. That we will rise with him is Jesus' lasting promise to us all. It is with this hope, alive in our hearts, that we journey on, through this Holy Week, through these challenging times, until we witness the dawn of a new day and the light of the Lord shining brightly in our world. God bless you all.

Fr Jonathan

What has happened to the Sunday Obligation?

The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation is suspended at the moment.

What about my Easter duties?

Bishop Mark writes: In their letter of 18 March 2020, the President and the Vice-President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales said "*in these emergency circumstances, and for as long as they last, the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is removed. This is, without doubt, the teaching of the Church (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2181). This pandemic is the 'serious reason' why this obligation does not apply at this time.*"

Many of the faithful will be aware of their Easter Duties; that is to receive Holy Communion during the Easter Season and by custom, to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation beforehand. The Code of Canon Law (CIC 920) says *each of the faithful is obliged to receive holy communion at least once a year. This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season unless it is fulfilled for a just cause at another time during the year.* The requirement for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation comes from the need to be in a state of grace to receive Holy Communion (CIC 916).

As it is not possible for the faithful to receive Holy Communion at this time, and into the future, the Bishops of England and Wales have dispensed the Easter Duties for the year 2020.

The Bishops have asked that we all should make a Perfect Act of Contrition at this time. Perfect contrition (or a Contrition of Charity) is true and real sorrow for our sins which is created when we realise the immense love of God for each one of us. We express this contrition when we realise how we offend God by our sinful words, deeds and omissions in contrast to the immeasurable love and mercy that he continually shows us.

This requires us to be contrite of heart for what we have done, know and be overwhelmed by the love and mercy of God for his children, and to approach this grace with humility and resolution not to sin again.

An Act of Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Saviour Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

Making an Act of Spiritual Communion

ST THOMAS AQUINAS defined Spiritual Communion as “an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Holy Sacrament and a loving embrace as though we had already received Him.”

The basis of this practice was explained by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*: In the Eucharist, “unlike any other sacrament, the mystery [of communion] is so perfect that it brings us to the heights of every good thing: Here is the ultimate goal of every human desire, because here we attain God and God joins himself to us in the most perfect union.” Precisely for this reason it is good to cultivate in our hearts a constant desire for the sacrament of the Eucharist. This was the origin of the practice of “spiritual communion,” which has happily been established in the Church for centuries and recommended by saints who were masters of the spiritual life. St. Teresa of Jesus wrote: “When you do not receive communion and you do not attend Mass, you can make a spiritual communion, which is a most beneficial practice; by it the love of God will be greatly impressed on you”..

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

What about the Easter Triduum?

Fr Jonathan will celebrate the Easter Triduum alone in the church, but you are invited to join him in spirit at the following times:

9 April **MAUNDY THURSDAY Mass of the Lord's Supper** 7.00pm

10 April **GOOD FRIDAY Celebration of the Passion of the Lord** 3.00pm

11 April **HOLY SATURDAY The Easter Vigil** 8.00pm

He will be praying for our intentions during these celebrations and especially for those affected by the pandemic. Please keep him in your prayers.

On Maundy Thursday many parishes will be live-streaming the Mass of the Lord's Supper including Plymouth Cathedral. The Bishops have proposed that St Chad's in Birmingham is to be the focus of the national coverage of Watching at the Altar of Repose. This will be live-streamed so that we're all able to participate in this wonderful practice.

CAFOD

Cafod are hosting a live online **children's liturgy** for families, on **Sundays at 10.00am.**

Masses on line

Fr Jonathan will hopefully be posting a recording of Sunday Mass each Sunday morning on the Blessed Sacrament Facebook page and YouTube channel. Bishop Mark is live-streaming Mass from the Cathedral each day at 11:00am and evening prayer at 4:30pm. There is a link for the YouTube channel on the Diocese of Plymouth Facebook page.

SOS - let us know if you need help

We have tried to contact a number of people who we think may need some help or support but please do let us know via the parish email or the parish phone number 01392 274724 if there is any way we can provide practical support for you and your families in the coming days and weeks. We have a team of volunteers who can be contacted if you, or someone you know are in self-isolation and need food, medication or a friendly chat. If you can also volunteer to help please also let the parish office know.

Pope Francis on mercy...

There are many good reasons to believe in mankind's capacity to act together in solidarity and, on the basis of our interconnection and interdependence, to demonstrate concern for the vulnerable of our brothers and sisters and for the protection of the common good. This attitude of mutual responsibility is rooted in our fundamental vocation to fraternity and a life in common,

Pope's April Intention

We pray that those suffering from addiction may be helped and accompanied.

The Pope tweets...

Let us all pray together for all work in the media, who work to communicate, to inform us, so that people are not so isolated, and to educate children. We pray for all those who are helping us bear this time of isolation.

Look & Ichthus sheets

These are attached.

St Nick's News

As you will be aware, St Nicholas school is closed to all children except those whose parents work for key identified services or for those who are extremely vulnerable. I am so proud of the staff at our school who have worked under huge pressure this week and volunteered to keep running throughout the Easter holidays to enable these key workers to keep the local services going.

Please pray for our children, families and staff during this hugely demanding time. In the words of Pope Francis, 'we can believe in the love of the people we have around us, and there we can find hope'.

Angela Folland Executive Headteacher

Keep up to date

Please see the parish Facebook page **Blessed Sacrament Exeter** and the parish website **blesseedsacrament.org.uk** for up to date information and spiritual support.

Wednesday Word is going online!

Wednesday Word is an opportunity to prepare for Sunday Mass by listening to and reflecting on the upcoming Sunday Gospel with a group of friendly parishioners. We have run a successful group since September in the Richard Reynolds Centre.

Wednesday Word faith group now online We are going to run a Wednesday Word group every Wednesday at 2.00pm through a live conference call. Even if this is something new for you or out of your comfort zone, we encourage you to be brave and have a go; you will be greeted by friendly helpful parish faces! This type of technology is new to many of us and we are all learning together. We recommended that you use a laptop or iPad to join the meeting, but if you don't have access to this equipment, it is possible to dial into the meeting using a telephone. We will send you simple

instructions and a link to click on in order to join us. If you would like to participate in this group next week, please email Maria Quinn exeter-pastoral-assistant@prcdtr.org.uk by Tuesday at 5:00. She will email you a link with the very simple steps of how to join us for the meeting. If you would like to join a Wednesday Word group and an evening slot would be more convenient for you, please email Maria with your details and what time of day would be best. We would love to be able to accommodate this. With prayers and best wishes, the Blessed Sacrament Team

Exeter Foodbank

The Foodbank would still appreciate any donations. Everyone is finding it hard to get food items at the moment but please spare a little for those who have none. Thank you. It will not be possible to leave your donations at the Church at this time. Why not save them up and we can collect them in the future or add them to the collection baskets in the supermarkets.

Joy of Hope Course

This can be downloaded by clicking on this link: [The Joy of Hope: D/L Course](#) and entering the password JOH19down. This is for your personal use and should not be shared. If you have any problems downloading, please contact us.

Mass online

Plymouth Cathedral, every morning at 11am <https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/>
There are also several churches within the Diocese of Westminster which have live streaming: www.churchservices.tv EWTN or Catholic TV can be watched on Sky or on the internet at www.ewtn.co.uk or www.catholictv.org

Urbi et Orbi - *to the City and to the World*

For those of you who missed the extraordinary and moving moments with our Holy Father in St Peter's Square last Friday 27 March, or for those who did witness it but whose Italian is not quite up to speed, attached is the English translation of his homily.

Diocesan YouTube channel

Bishop Mark asks if you can please all click on the link below and subscribe to our Diocesan YouTube channel and ask others to do the same. With enough subscribers we will be able to stream live. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8KUEwsXFK3VBLEfn4H1tBw>

The God Who Speaks

The next sessions have had to be postponed, but the talks have been recorded and are available at www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk and on Facebook @plymouthdiocese. 1. How Catholics Read the Bible; 2. Christ in the Old Testament; 3. The Fulfilment of the Covenant in the New Testament. Let's use our 'lockdown' time profitably. Further Scriptural resources are available: www.stpaulrepository.com.

Vade Mecum for Holy Week 2020

Please see the attached from Bishop Mark regarding services during Holy Week and Easter. Details of the online services are highlighted.

Blessed Sacrament YouTube channel

This may be of value to families with young children. This video deals with the subject of praying - <https://youtu.be/TektMt3hd8>

Additional resources

During School Closures please find attached a list of suggested resources. We also encourage families to join the Diocese of Plymouth Youth Events Facebook page so that we can share experiences and resources along with offering moral support through this time. There is also a list of other resources for use by families from our Gift

The Word

SUNDAY 5 APRIL *Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord*

This gospel is read at the procession with palms before Mass:

Matthew 21:1-11 *Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!*

When they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village facing you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her: untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord has need of them," and he will send them immediately.' This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Sion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass.' The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the ass and the colt, and put their garments on them, and he sat thereon. Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. And the crowds that went before him and that followed him shouted, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!' And when he entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, 'Who is this?' And the crowds said, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee.'

FIRST READING

Isaiah 50:4-7 *I did not cover my face against insult – I know I shall not be shamed.*

The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue. So that I may know how to reply to the wearied he provides me with speech. Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple. The Lord has opened my ear. For my part, I made no resistance, neither did I turn away. I offered my back to those who struck me, my cheeks to those who tore at my beard; I did not cover my face against insult and spittle. The Lord comes to my help, so that I am untouched by the insults. So, too, I set my face like flint; I know I shall not be shamed

PSALM RESPONSE

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

SECOND READING

Philippians 2:6-11 *He humbled himself, but God raised him high.*

His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave and became as men are; and being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names so that all beings in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld, should bend the knee at the name of Jesus and that every tongue should acclaim Jesus Christ as Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

GOSPEL

Matthew 26:14-27:66 *The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

SUNDAY 12 APRIL *Easter Sunday*

FIRST READING

Acts 10:34.37-43

We have eaten and drunk with him after his resurrection.

Psalm Response

This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad.

SECOND READING

Colossians 3:1-4

You must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is.

GOSPEL

John 20:1-9

He must rise from the dead.

SUNDAY 19 APRIL *Second Sunday of Easter*

FIRST READING

Acts 2:42-47

The faithful all lived together and owned everything in common.

Psalm Response

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end.

SECOND READING

1Peter 1:3-9

In his great mercy he has given us a new birth as his sons by raising Jesus from the dead.

GOSPEL

John 20:19-31

Eight days later, Jesus came.

Mass Intentions

Sunday 5 April	<i>Natalia Jasinska (Birthday)</i>
Sunday 12 April	<i>Jack & Peggy Webber RIP</i>
Saturday 18 April	<i>Special Intention (Birthdays)</i>
Sunday 19 April	<i>Theresa McDonell RIP</i>
Thursday 2 April	<i>Frank Lyn RIP</i>
Friday 24 April	<i>Anne Leach RIP</i>

Attachments:

'Sunday Message' Mass Sheet.

Look & Ichthus Children's Sheets.

Additional resources

Pope Francis's homily, 27 March 2020.

Vade Mecum for Holy Week 2020.