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Year A PALM SUNDAY

"TO THE HEIGHTS" YOUTH EDITION ALSO AVAILABLE

Sunday Mass Readings

Gospel:

Matthew 21:1-11

First Reading:

Isaiah 50:4-7

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 21(22):8-9, 17-20, 23-24

Second Reading:

Philippians 2:6-11

Gospel:

Matthew 26:14-27, 66

"My Father, if this cup cannot pass by without me drinking it, your will be done!"



Léon Bonnat, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

Hear

Grab your Bible and look up the Gospel reading. Don't have one? No worries, you can find this week's readings online [here](#).

Check out [this video](#) on the readings for children.

Pray

In the Gospel today we hear the longer Gospel about the Passion and Death of Jesus. There is a lot to take in, so why not choose a particular section to pray with each day?

- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this piece of Scripture? How do these words resonate with you personally?
- Where would you imagine yourself at Jesus' passion? Can you identify with any of the Apostles, or with Mary? Would you have been an onlooker? How would you have felt?
- A beautiful way to pray Holy Week is to choose one character from the Passion story, and meditate on the week through their eyes: what they saw, heard, experienced. Let their experience touch your heart and draw you closer to Jesus' heart this week too.

Talk

In this week's Gospel, we hear about the passion and death of Jesus as we begin Holy Week.

- What events happened during Holy Week?
- Why do you think we say "Good Friday" when it was the day Jesus was crucified? What is "good" about it?
- How can we make this a very special week in our own family? How can we create a sacred space to remind us of the events of Holy Week, and Jesus' love for us? How can we treat each other with love, and serve each other, just like Jesus asked us to?

Here are some ideas for sacred spaces at home:

- [Resurrection Eggs](#)
- [Free Colouring Page Printables](#) (Shining Light)
- [Catholic Icing Ultimate Guide](#)

Family Challenge!

Pray the Stations of the Cross together as a family this week, even just choosing 2 or 3 stations each day.

There's a beautiful one to download for children here at [OSV](#) or older children might benefit from the Holy Family Mission Dramatisation on [YouTube](#).

WHO ARE WE LIKE?

Today we begin Holy Week, the days during which we journey with Jesus on his way of the cross and anticipate his Resurrection on Easter. Today's liturgy begins with the procession with palms to remind us of Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. The story of Jesus' Passion and death in Matthew's Gospel focuses particularly on the obedience of Jesus to the will of his Father. As Jesus sends his disciples to prepare for Passover, he indicates that the events to come are the will of the Father (Matthew 26:18). In Jesus' prayer in the garden, he prays three times to the Father to take away the cup of suffering, but each time, Jesus concludes by affirming his obedience to the Father's will (Matthew 26:39-44). Even Matthew's description of Jesus' death shows Jesus' obedience to the Father.

Another theme of Matthew's Gospel is to show Jesus as the fulfillment of Scripture. Throughout the Passion narrative, Matthew cites and alludes to Scripture to show that the events of Jesus' Passion and death are in accordance with all that was foretold. And if the events were foretold, then God is in control. In addition, Matthew is particularly concerned that the reader does not miss the fact that Jesus is the Suffering Servant of the Old Testament.

Jesus acts in obedience to the Father even in death, so that sins may be forgiven. Matthew makes this clear in the story of the Lord's Supper. As Jesus blesses the chalice, he says: "... for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:28)

While the Gospels of Matthew and Mark have many parallels in their narrative of the Passion, there are a few details worth noting that are unique to Matthew. Only Matthew indicates the price paid to Judas for betraying Jesus. The story of Judas's death is also found only in Matthew, as is the detail that Pilate's wife received a warning in a dream and that Pilate washed his hands of Jesus' death. Finally, Matthew's Gospel alone mentions the earthquakes and other phenomena that happened after Jesus' death.

Matthew places the responsibility for Jesus' death on the Sanhedrin, the chief priests and elders who were responsible for the Temple. However, the animosity that those Jewish leaders and the Jewish people demonstrate toward Jesus is not to be interpreted in ways that blame the Jewish people for Jesus' death. Throughout Matthew's Gospel, the narrative reflects the tension that probably existed between the early Christian community and their Jewish contemporaries. At the Second Vatican Council, the Council Fathers made clear that all sinners share responsibility for the suffering and death of Jesus and that it is wrong to place blame for Jesus' Passion on the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus or on Jewish people today.

There are many vantage points from which to engage in Jesus' Passion. In the characters of Matthew's Gospel, we find reflections of ourselves and the many ways in which we sometimes respond to Jesus. Sometimes we are like Judas, who betrays Jesus and comes to regret it. We are sometimes like Peter, who denies him, or like the disciples, who fell asleep during Jesus' darkest hour but then act rashly and violently at his arrest. Sometimes we are like Simon, who is pressed into service to help Jesus carry his cross. Sometimes we are like the leaders who fear Jesus or like Pontius Pilate, who washed his hands of the whole affair. Jesus dies so that our sins will be forgiven.

The events of Jesus' Passion, death, and Resurrection are called the Paschal Mystery. No amount of study will exhaust or explain the depth of love that Jesus showed in offering this sacrifice for us. After we have examined and studied the stories we have received about these events, we are left with one final task—to meditate on these events and on the forgiveness that Jesus' obedience won for us.

taken from **Loyola Press Sunday Connection**

CHECK IT OUT:

IS IRELAND STILL CATHOLIC? EWTN NEWS IN DEPTH REPORT



Ireland was once known as one of the most Catholic countries in the entire world. In the 1950's and 60's, it was estimated that about 90% of the Irish population went to Mass on Sundays. However now in 2023, that number has dropped significantly to around 30%. For this St. Patrick's Day, EWTN News reporter Colm Flynn traveled to his home country to talk to members of the Church about why they think the faith has declined so much in the Emerald Isle.

Includes interviews with Bishop Phonsie and community members from Holy Family Mission.



Jesus shows us His wounds so we won't be afraid to show him ours. Fr Mike Schmitz

HE DIED - FOR ME!

It's Holy Week. What does that mean to you? Is it simply a relief just to have some time off school or college? Or is there something more going on? Each year we are given a precious few days to really refocus our hearts on what matters most in this life: the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God! We owe it to ourselves as well as to God to take a few minutes each day to sit in silence in our rooms, or a Church, or outdoors and just think about how great His love is for us, that He would send His Son to die in our place so that we may have eternal life with Him in heaven. Think of the humanity of Jesus, knowing what He was to face during His passion and death, but choosing it out of love for each one of us too, without hesitation.

That's how much you're worth! Think about how we have a God who understands pain, rejection, cruelty, loneliness, fear, torment, abandonment. Think about what the mother of Jesus went through that week, seeing her only Son, completely innocent, tortured, mocked and abused, but silently supporting Him because she knew what the end goal was: our salvation. Then rejoice on Easter Sunday with her: Jesus conquered death, sin and darkness!

Make a special effort this week to pray the Stations of the Cross. You can watch them online, or use the post on our Instagram page to meditate on a few stations each day. Ask Jesus to show you this week how much He really loves you, and pray for the grace to let that love affect your whole life!



Holy Family Mission Stations of the Cross



Reckless Love - Cory Asbury

Check out our [To the Heights Youth Newsletter](#)



Family Prayer

*Lord, by your Cross and Resurrection
You have set us free, You are the
Saviour of the World.*



EVENTS

PRAYER AROUND THE CROSS: Holy Family Mission, Glencomeragh House, Good Friday at 7.30pm. Music, prayer and reflection. All welcome.

ARISE FAMILY CONFERENCE: Tramore, Co. Waterford, **April 10th - 13th**. Workshops, Guest Speakers, Fun & Activities, Sacrament. For more information check out www.arisefamilyconference.ie

EVENTS AT THE FOYER OF CHARITY, DUNMORE EAST:

- First Five Saturdays: April 1st: Morning Prayer, Mass, Confession, Adoration, Rosary 8.45-10.45am
- Saturday April 1st, 8th, 22nd: Journey into the Secret of Mary (St. Louis de Montfort) with Fr. Kilian Byrne 11am-12.30pm
- Wednesday April 5th: Book of Revelation Study Group 7.30-9pm

More Info: Helen at 086 1678027 / hellywilliams@gmail.com

CATHOLIC MOTHERS' ASSOCIATION RETREAT DAY: Holy Family Mission, Glencomeragh House, **Saturday May 13th**. Contact Sinead for more info at (086) 0528282

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