

Sunday Message

PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY

THE WORD

Year A • 2 April 2023 • Colour: Violet • Psalter Week 2

A LIGHT NO DARKNESS COULD OVERCOME

Matthew 26:14-27:66



The account of the passion and death of Jesus can seem like an extra-long Gospel we have to listen to during every holy week. An ordeal to endure. But this is a profound story, rich in detail and meaning. An excellent way to listen to it is to make it personal, to imagine ourselves caught up in the events of those dramatic days.

We can do this in two ways this year.

First, to connect what happened to Jesus in his time and what is happening today. In his book *Let Us Dream*, Pope Francis writes about good and bad spirits. The battle between the voices of good and evil is real, he says. The sophisticated may be inclined to sneer at these old-fashioned concepts, but the forces of darkness are genuine and very powerful. We need only look at the human rights abuses during the war in Ukraine for proof of evil at work. Evil is a thing. Evil exists. You could say that with the world still reeling from war in Europe, darkness has fallen over the earth, just like the darkness that fell over Jerusalem the day Jesus hung on the cross.

The story of Holy Week is a cosmic drama - a life and death confrontation between good and evil, darkness and light, despair and hope. Evil exists but so also does good. And so much good is being done; a superabundance of goodness is being poured out in response to the suffering in Ukraine. Think of how so many people opened their hearts, homes, and wallets—a wonderful overflowing of compassion and love.

We Christians journey through this week knowing that good and light and hope have triumphed over evil and darkness and despair, and we are people of goodness and light and hope. As you listen to the passion story, pray that your life will always reflect these Godly values.

Second, the Gospel writers tell the story of Holy Week as if it's a magnificent drama you might see on stage. The story unfolds with a colourful cast of characters - heroes and antiheroes. The gospel writers invite us to apply the drama to each of us individually. Imagine you are present in Jerusalem as the week's events play out. What do you think you would have done? What role might you have played? What character might you have been?

Do you identify with the women, the faithful few, who stuck with Jesus right to the end? Do you identify with weak Peter, the awestruck centurion, or the dutiful Simon of Cyrene? Or with the mob, people easily led and manipulated?

We want to think we would have been among the tiny few who followed Jesus to the foot of the cross. But would we?

The journey to Jerusalem is all about discipleship. Enter into the story as you listen to it now and on Good Friday. Take your place. Who are you this seismic week? ■

REFLECT

Matthew describes how Pilate publicly washed his hands to disassociate himself from the execution of an innocent man.

Another form of washing also plays a major role in the drama of Holy Week. The washing of the feet is reenacted every Holy Thursday during the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

Ten years ago, just a few days after his election to the papacy, Pope Francis made headlines when he washed the feet of twelve young people at a juvenile detention centre outside Rome. They included women and non-Christians - something new for a pope to do.

Pope Francis wanted to make a very clear point: As Christians, we are called to wash feet, and we cannot be selective in whose feet we wash. Foot-washing is about service; it is about bending low before another as a servant. That's what Jesus did at the Last Supper and on the cross of Calvary.

It's what we are called to do, too. ■

SAY

"Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set me free. You are the saviour of the world."

LEARN

The passion and death of Christ is proof of God's love for us

Jesus ended up on a cross because of the kind of life he lived. It is the kind of life we also are called to live

Jesus did not die for a misty mass called humanity. He suffered and died for each one of us individually

DO

Don't treat this as if it were any ordinary week. Make a conscious effort to journey with Jesus through these days.

PRAY

Think of those who have suffered because of their commitment to justice, truth, and love. Thank God for them.

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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2nd April 2023

PASSION (PALM) SUNDAY

Weekend masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet 7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory 11:00am Dromara

Weekday masses

Mon 9:00am Leitrim 7:30pm Dechomet
Tues 9:00am Dromara
Wed 7:30pm Leitrim

Holy Thursday *Chrism Mass* in Newry Cathedral at 10:30am. All are welcome to attend.

Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper
6pm Leitrim 8pm Dromara

Good Friday *Stations of the Cross at 3pm*
Dechomet Leitrim Dromara

Evening Service of the Passion and Unveiling of the Cross
(there will be no kissing of the Cross this year)
6pm Gargory 8pm Dromara

Holy Saturday *Easter Vigil* 9pm Dromara

Easter Sunday

9am Gargory 10am Leitrim
11am Dromara 12noon Dechomet

Holy Water will be blessed on Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. Please bring along empty bottles as no bottles have been supplied this year.

There will be no mass Easter Mon, Tues nor Wed

Recently deceased

Very Rev Dean Arthur Byrne, Lurgan

Anniversaries

Dechomet

Sat 1st Stephen McElroy
Mon 3rd Mary and Henry O'Hare and Deceased Family Members

Leitrim

Sat 1st James Gerard Kelly (Backaderry)
Kathleen Cunningham
Wed 5th Mickey and Christopher Malone

Dromara

Sun 2nd Julia McCann
Stephen O'Hare
Sun 9th Annie Gordon (Drumkerragh Rd)

The **Divine Mercy Chaplet & Novena** (as given to the world through St Faustina) begins on Good Friday until Divine Mercy Sunday (Sunday after Easter)
www.thedivinemercy.org/message/devotions/pray-the-chaplet

Collections Parish	Dromara	Drumgooland
	£576	£653

Earthquake Appeal - £4,150 was sent to Trócaire this week. This was made up of cash and cheque donations. Any donations after this time will be forwarded with the Lenten returns.

Sick and housebound will be attended this week

Please return **Trócaire boxes and envelopes** from the weekend 15th/16th April onwards.

Congratulations to the 38 children of the local schools who were *Confirmed* over the past week.

To prepare for Easter Sunday Mass, there will be a short *Choir Rehearsal* in St Mary's Church, following Sat evening Mass (1st Apr)

Confessions

Mon 3rd Apr Dechomet 6:45 – 7:15pm
Tues 4th Apr Dromara 6:45 – 7:15pm
Wed 5th Apr Leitrim 6:45 – 7:15pm
Sat 8th Apr Gargory 10:00 – 10:30am

Distribution of Holy Communion

The wearing of a face covering will be at the discretion of the minister.

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish Míchéal James McGreevy

Please join the 'Friends of St Michael's Parents Group' on **Sun 2nd Apr at 3pm** for a great afternoon of *Easter Bingo* in the Parish Hall. Doors open at 2:30pm. **£100 JACKPOT** must go! Great *Easter Raffle*, so please come along and show your support for the school.

Young people who signed up for the *Pope John Paul II Award* in Sept/Oct 21, and are in the process of completing the Award, are asked to return their Completed Award Reflection Book to either their Award Leader or their School Head of RE (if possible before Easter). Closing date for returned completed Book is Wed 26th April. Only those who return completed Record Cards and Books will receive an Award.

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