

We acknowledge and respect the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which we stand, the elders, past and present and all the Dharawal people. May we too be good stewards of this land.

26 March 2023
**Palm Sunday of the Passion of
the Lord Year A**



Entrance Antiphon

Six days before the Passover, when the Lord came into the city of Jerusalem, the children ran to meet him; in their hands they carried palm branches and with a loud voice cried out: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed are you, who have come in your abundant mercy! O gates, lift high your heads; grow higher, ancient doors. Let him enter, the king of glory! Who is this king of glory? He, the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed are you, who have come in your abundant mercy!

First Reading from the prophet Isaiah 50:4-7

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 21:8-9. 17-20. 23-24. R. v.2

Response: My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Second Reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians 2:6-11

Gospel Acclamation

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

Christ became obedient for us even to death dying on the cross. Therefore God raised him on high and gave him a name above all other names. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ, king of endless glory!

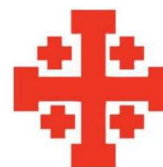
Holy Gospel according to Matthew 26:14 – 27:66

Communion Antiphon

Father, if this chalice cannot pass without my drinking it, your will be done.

Good Friday Holy Land Collection

April 7th, 2023



1. On April 7th, we celebrate Good Friday. This is a unique day when we recall the love of Jesus unto death for us, when he shows us the extent to which God is in solidarity with our suffering humanity. Can we use this occasion to recall our need to be in solidarity with those suffering around us, and in a particular way with the suffering Church of the Holy Land?
2. Supporting the church in the Holy Land is an historic mission. Since the time of St. Paul, who urged his missionary Churches not to forget the needs of the Church in Jerusalem, Christians worldwide have understood the responsibility to support the land where Jesus walked.
3. It has never been easy to be a Christian in the Holy Land. In these challenging times in the Middle East, Christians are experiencing unique hardships, made all the worse due to the pandemic. We have an opportunity to help them through the Holy Land (Good Friday) Collection.
4. Christians in the Holy Land face special challenges, many of which we hear about in the daily news. The political, religious and military challenges in the Holy Land are more complex than ever. The wars, unrest and instability have been especially hard on Christians. Supporting the Holy Land (Good Friday) Collection offers hope to the Holy Land Christians. Over recent years, their difficulties have been greatly magnified by the Covid-19 Pandemic, not only on the health of the people but through the severe economic consequences that have disproportionately affected the most vulnerable.
5. Who are these Christians? Christians living in the Holy Land today are descendants of those who first believed and lived the Christian faith. It is important that Christians continue to live, work and pray in the Holy Land.
6. The Holy Land Collection offers all Catholics an opportunity to express their solidarity with Christians in the Holy Land. A donation to the Holy Father's annual appeal is a direct way to make a difference in the lives of those caught up in war, violence and instability in this region, and of course the recent pandemic.
7. What has been accomplished? Normally, each year's Holy Land (Good Friday) Collection:
 - Supports 29 parishes, four homes for orphans, three academic institutions
 - Helps keep schools open for over 10,000 pre-K through to Grade 12 students
 - Supports 120 men preparing to be priests or brothers
 - Helps rehabilitate 80 homes for Christian families
 - Provides senior care facilities in Bethlehem and Nazareth
 - Creates 1,500 jobs in the Holy Land for Christians
 - Preserves 54 shrines connected with the life of Jesus and the prophets
8. Thank you for supporting the Holy Land (Good Friday) Collection as encouraged by Pope Francis. Through this Collection, you join with Catholics around the world to stand in solidarity with the Church in the Holy Land. When you contribute to the Holy Land Collection, you become an instrument of peace in the land where Jesus walked.

Worship: Mass and Devotions

Sunday Mass	Weekday Mass	Devotions
Saturday Vigil: 6pm	Mon, Tues, Wed Mass at 9am	Adoration with the Rosary: Saturday 9.30am
Sunday: 9.30 am & 5pm	Thursday - Mass at 7.30pm	Divine Mercy Devotion: Third Sunday at 3pm
Filipino Mass: Third Sunday at 11.15am	Fri & Sat Mass at 9am	Alliance of the 2 Hearts Mass and Devotion: Friday 14 April from 7.30pm
Samoan Mass: First Sunday of even months at 12 noon		Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday during Lent at 7pm in the Church.
Maori Mass: First Sunday at 2pm		Reconciliation: Saturday 11 am

Contact us

Office Hours: Tuesday-Friday 9.30am-12.30pm

Phone: 9603 7373 / 0434 705 176

Email: varroville@dow.org.au

Website: varroville.dow.org.au

Parish Priest: Fr. Shane Kelleher OCD

Assistant Priest: Fr "Sam" Ransom Rapirap OCD

Parish Associate: Sr "Jill" Girlie Sudario, CM

Prayer intentions

For the sick & homebound: Myka Mangos, Kevin Cloran, Karen Browne, Amanda & John Meredith, Reg Gardner, Phyllis Cooper, Sr Heather Burke, Marie & Barry Atkins, Carol & Gabriel Gonzales, Amelia Jimenez, Joe Spinnato, Susan Mella, Sean Finnerty, Rose Levoune, Francisco Carmona, Doris Wahhib, John Kajdrys.

May they experience the saving power of the risen Lord amidst their pain & affliction.

For our recently dearly departed: Phyllis Cooper, Emmanuel Vella, Hugh Madden, June Wrightman,

Those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Fr Tadgh, Anthony Mangos, Veni Menezes, Virginia Abunassur, John McDermott.
Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, may perpetual light shine upon them.



Our Community: Rosters

09 April	Saturday 6pm	Sunday 9.30am	Sunday 5pm
Welcomers	Myra, Paul & Lori	Allan & Anita	Geoff & Margaret
Altar Servers	Maria, Cassandra & Abigail	Orly, Fisiilose & Claire	Frank
Readers	Ryan & Bevina	Tina	Evangeline & Kavya
Refreshments	Beatrice & Madonna	Karen, Katalina & Tess	
CLOTW			
Flowers	Lorraine & Effie	Church Vacuuming	Binny family
Counters	Vilma & Jeanette	Foyer Cleaning	Wicks family

Our Community

Easter Mass Times:

Holy Thursday– Mass at 7:30pm

Good Friday– Stations of the Cross at 10am
will be held outdoors, weather permitting
The Passion of the Lord at 3pm

Easter Saturday– Easter Vigil 7.00pm

Easter Sunday– Mass at 9:30am & 5.00pm

Feast of Divine Mercy - Sunday 16 April: Confession, Mass & Devotions from 2pm.

RCIA: This Lent we include Grant, Jack and Adam in our Prayers of the Faithful and I ask all parishioners to keep them in your personal daily prayers as we join in the journey to renew our own baptismal promises at Easter. *Diane Redmayne RCIA*

Musicians Urgently Needed for our parish choir groups.

Do you have any talent to share with our Parish Music Ministry. Please talk to a choir member after Mass.



Bulletin Notices

A Lenten Invitation from Bishop Brian Mascord "I would like to take this opportunity to remind us of the call of Jesus—a call that was given to all of us—to go out and make disciples (Mt 28:18–20). It is not enough to live good “saintly” lives and then remain silent. This mission is to share the invitation of Christ to “come and see” (Jn 1:39). It is not the work of certain special individuals, but rather the responsibility of all Christians and the communities of faith in which they live." (Bishop Brian Mascord).

Invitational Culture – Did you know? Recent research shows that 4 in 10 Australians would accept an invitation to an Easter service if invited by a close friend or family member. In December of 2022, the Australian Community Survey (2022 ACS) asked Australians if they would go to church this Easter if a close friend or family member invited them. Four in 10 (42%) would go if invited. A further 19% of those surveyed said they were unsure. 10% said they have no close friends or family who attend church. "Interestingly, people from all age groups were equally likely to say 'yes' to an invitation", said NCLS Research Director, Dr Ruth Powell. Please take the time to read Bishop Brian's Lenten Invitation if you haven't already and pray about who God might be asking you to invite this Easter, using the invitation cards that the Bishop provided to parishes.

Many of us have family and friends that are disconnected from the Church or faith. As Bishop Brian has said, "What are you willing to give for the sake of those you love?" Please take a few moments to read the letter from Bishop Brian and prayerfully consider the question: Who is God asking me to reach out to this Lent?

Stabat Mater – Good Friday Musical Meditation – 7pm Good Friday 7 April 2023 at Holy Family Catholic Church Ingleburn; GB Pergolesi's, "Stabat Mater" is a musical meditation on the suffering of Mary on Good Friday inspired by a poem by Jacopone da Todi. It refers to the prophecy of Simeon, that a sword shall pierce the heart of Christ's mother (Luke 2: 35,) describing Mary's intense sorrow at seeing her beloved Son on the cross. Everyone is welcome to attend this special event. No tickets but donation at the door would be greatly appreciated.

Sandon Point Combined Churches Sunrise Service 9 April Easter Sunday at 6am; The combined Christian Churches of the Northern Illawarra have extended an invitation across denominations to join for a combined celebration of hope as the sun rises at Sandon Point on Easter Sunday morning. No need to book, just turn up.

The Journey, Weekly Podcast; On The Journey This Week: A program to start the Church's "Great Week" with Palm Sunday reflections from Fr Mark De Battista and Mother Hilda, plus three Holy Week reflections from Darren McDowell, Fr Sean Cullen and Fr Antony Jukes, and some great contemporary Christina music. The Journey podcast available at www.jcr.org.au.

Holy Land Pilgrimage: Trace the journey of Jesus from the land of his birth to the way he carried his cross and gave the eternal sacrifice in this 14-day Holy Land pilgrimage to Jordan & Israel led by Fr Salas Muttathukattil MSFS. This pilgrimage features places from the Old & New Testament and includes Petra, Mt

Nebo, Bethlehem, Nazareth, Sea of Galilee, Mt Sinai and Jerusalem for an all-inclusive offer of \$6,940 AUD. The fare includes Airfare + Local Transfers in Deluxe Coaches + Stay in Premium Hotels + All Breakfasts & Dinners + English speaking professional guides. Departure from Sydney and Melbourne on 21st May 2023. For inquiries & bookings call 1300 721 561 or email us info@magiholidays.com.au

Catechist Retreat 2023: Prayer, a journey of friendship with God The retreat will be facilitated by Fr Aloysius Rego OCD, the regional vicar of the Discalced Carmelite Friars in Australia-Oceania and is a much loved and experienced retreat facilitator. The retreat will be held in Campbelltown on Monday, 1 May, and in Gerringong on Friday, 5 May. Catechists will be able to register for either retreat and spouses are welcome to attend. Please register here or by visiting <https://www.dow.org.au/events/> and selecting the Catechist Retreat.

Free Technology Training for Seniors: Due to the popularity of the Cross + Generation technology program, CatholicCare, will again partner with St Benedicts Oran Park and CEDoW to help with the technology that you may be struggling with. Bring in your device, either your phone, laptop or tablet and the students will assist you with becoming more confident in downloading apps, sending messages or even using google maps. The first day will be Tuesday 9 May from 12pm – 2.30. This will include lunch on the day, a briefing chat followed by training. The following dates will have afternoon tea provided.

☑ Tuesday 16 May 1pm-2.30pm

☑ Tuesday 23 May 1pm-2.30pm

☑ Tuesday 30 May 1pm-2.30pm

☑ Tuesday 6 June 1pm-2.30pm

Please join us in this unique opportunity to connect with seniors, and students for some information sharing in a fun relaxed setting at St Benedict's Catholic College Oran Park. Places will fill quickly, so please contact Jane Hollier Parish and Community Officer CatholicCare on 0417018152 or janeh@catholiccare.dow.org.au

Marriage Enrichment Weekend Learn to live your best life in love! **Join us on 14-16 April 2023** at Mt Carmel Retreat Centre, Varroville, NSW a stunning & tranquil oasis on the edge of Sydney. Book online at www.wwme.org.au or contact Christine & Terry Mahony on 0490 774 419 or Email: nswbookings@wwme.org.au

Appin Massacre Memorial Ceremony Sunday 16 April 2023 Cataract Dam Picnic Area 11am – 3.30pm. Hosted by: Winga Myamly Reconciliation Group. The event will take place regardless of weather conditions. Please see flyer for contacts and additional details.

Eastern Europe Pilgrimage of Mercy commences 13 June 2023: A rare combination of Eastern Europe's most intriguing cities of Budapest, Krakow and Prague. Be blessed by the powerful graces of the great Shrines of Divine Mercy and the Black Madonna of Czestochowa. Relish a 3-night stay in spectacular Krakow as we retrace the places and graces of Pope St John Paul II. Departing on 13 June 2023 with Fr Richard Healey. More info: <https://www.harvestjourneys.com/tour/pilgrimage-of-mercy/>

Reflection by Father Michael Tate

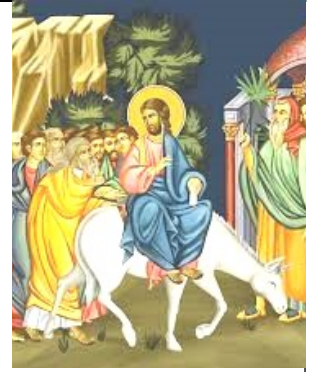
Jesus entered Jerusalem, not as a warrior in the tradition of King David as many had hoped for, but riding simply on a donkey. The disciples and the crowd applauded him, but they proved fickle in their support.

On the other hand, Jesus remained steadfast in his commitment to non-violent revolutionary change of the religious and political systems so as to establish the reign of God. Why did he renounce marshalling human and angelic warriors to further his cause?

First, Jesus embodied God-for-us, and God does not want the destruction of those he has created out of love. Second, Jesus had a premonition that an armed revolt would lead to the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersal of the Jewish people (as occurred in 70AD).

Third, another Gospel (Luke) recounts that as Jesus laboured up Mount Calvary he turned to some wailing women and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, weep rather for yourselves and for your children.' He knew that they suffer grievously in armed uprising. This is seen in barbaric reality in our own time with women being tortured and raped in campaigns of terror, trafficked into sexual slavery, suffering the loss of sons, husband and lovers.

We could take a moment to pray that the Church of the 21st century, successor of the pacifist Church of the first three centuries, may enter on a new period of reflection on these issues, grappling with the desire to protect the innocent, yet always challenged by the man on a donkey, Divine Prince of Peace.



Reflection by Dianne Bergant CSA

The Passion narrative, as described in the gospel of Matthew, is keen to drive home two particular points. Firstly, throughout this gospel, the gospel writer is at pains to demonstrate Jesus as fulfilling the prophecy of scripture. At the time of the arrest and the use of the thirty pieces of silver, we are reminded that these things took place to fulfil scripture. Secondly, this particular gospel emphasises the innocence of Jesus throughout the passion narrative: he is 'sold out' by one of his followers; his trial before the Sanhedrin is a farce; his most loyal follower denies association with him; Pilate declares himself innocent of Jesus' blood and the crowd accepts the consequences of their actions. At no point is any hint of guilt cast over Jesus. He is an innocent whose fate has been manipulated by others. In this gospel there is no conversation between Jesus and the criminals between whom he is crucified. There is no suggestion that Jesus too is a criminal who is deserving of his fate. His innocence is manifest.

These two themes merge together in this gospel. The manner of Jesus' arrest, trial and death are all in accordance with the prophecy of scripture (i.e. in accordance with God's will), and yet it is emphasised throughout that Jesus is innocent. There can be no accusation that Jesus is in any way deserving of his treatment and yet what befalls him is in keeping with God's plan. It emphasises the sacrificial act made by Jesus: a proven innocent giving his life for the good of others. The actions of those who plot against Jesus to seek his downfall actually serve to bring about his purpose. No other outcome was possible. The writer assures the audience that the death of Jesus was no accident; it was intended from the very beginning. Towards the end of the 19th Century, the German scholar, Martin Kähler, described the gospels as 'passion narratives with lengthy introductions'. Over time, this description was more commonly applied to the gospel of Mark, but it is quite true of all four gospels. The passion elements are the climax of each gospel narrative and were probably written first to establish the unique interpretation of each of the gospel communities. The remainder of the gospel was written to 'set the scene' for the culmination of the message in the passion. Reading the four accounts of the passion reveal the unique styles and themes of the different gospel writers.



This Passion narrative has been used in the past as justification for persecution of Jews. The text has the people of Jerusalem calling out, 'his blood be on us and on our children!' This has been interpreted (poorly) as reason to condemn all subsequent generations of Jews for the death of Jesus. However, this gospel was written in the aftermath of the fall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. The gospel writer sought some explanation for this disaster in the story of Jesus' life and death: it is the children of the crowd at Jesus' death who suffered in the fall of Jerusalem.

The passion narrative in the gospel of Matthew follows the gospel of Mark very closely. However, unlike in other sections of the gospel the Matthew writer has not just inserted sections from the Mark account. Rather, the material is reworked and given a unique Matthean 'flavour'. In addition, the Matthew account includes five events that are not found in the Mark account: Judas hanging himself (27:3-10); Pilate's wife's dream (27:19); Pilate's washing his hands (27:24-25); extraordinary events at the time of Jesus' death (27:51b-53); sealing and guarding the tomb (28:62)