



## PARISH OF ST. AGATHA 1 27TH/28TH MARCH 2021



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Jesus I Trust in You



### POPE FRANCIS: LIKE MARY, WE MUST FOLLOW JESUS

Pope Francis reflects on God's action during the pandemic, and our response. He offers prayers for all victims of violence, "especially those of this morning's attack in Indonesia in front of the Cathedral of Makassar". "We have begun Holy Week. For the second time we will live it within the context of the pandemic," Last year, he said, "we were mostly shocked; this year we are more sorely tried. And the economic crisis has grown severe." In the grave situation we are facing, what is God doing? the Pope asked. He responded, "Jesus takes up the Cross." The Pope explained that Jesus takes upon Himself not only the physical and psychological evils that accompany the pandemic, "but above all spiritual evil" – because, he said, "the Evil One takes advantage of crises in order to sow distrust, despair, and strife."

### MARY SHOWS US THE WAY

How, then, are we to respond? the Pope continued. His answer? "The Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus, who is also His first disciple shows us the way: She followed her Son." Mary, said Pope Francis, "took upon herself her own share of suffering, darkness and bewilderment, and walked the path of the Passion, keeping the lamp of faith burning in her heart." Pope Francis said, "With God's grace, we too can make this journey." And he encouraged us, in our own "daily way of the Cross," not to pass by our brothers and sisters in difficulty, but to "allow our hearts to be moved by compassion and draw near" to them. Like Simon the Cyrene, who was forced by the Romans to help Jesus carry the Cross, we too might ask, "Why me?" the Pope said. But it is precisely in that moment, he added, "that we will discover the gift that we have been given, without our own merit." The Holy Father concluded his reflection with a prayer that our Lady might help us, because, he said, "she always goes before us on the path of faith."

(Vatican News/Christopher Wells).

### WHO AM I - IN THE PASSION OF JESUS?

Holy Week begins today on Palm Sunday, with the people joyfully coming out to greet Jesus, who was traveling into Jerusalem. He comes as a humble King of Peace on a colt, to lead the spiritual war against the Enemy, who is Satan and Death. A colt is a very young male donkey, but because Jesus' **burden is light**, it has no problem carrying His weight. The people laid down their cloaks and palm branches before the path of Jesus. The willing donkey became the Christ-bearer and symbolises the humble nature of the King it carries. Every donkey today, miraculously has the mark and sign of a large cross on its back. In Baptism, we too are marked by the Sign of the Cross and asked to be Christ-bearers in the spirit humility. The laying down of the palm branches and cloaks symbolises the call for us to lay down our lives for God, who laid down His life for us. We are also called to lay down our freewill, in place of God's Divine Will to rule our lives.

### PASS FROM OUR SINFUL WAYS OVER TO GOD'S WAYS

Holy Week continues in the mystery of Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection, which is called the Paschal Mystery. **Paschal** is a Hebrew word and in English it means **Passover**. Jesus is calling us to **Pass-over** from our old sinful ways of the flesh to the new sinless ways of the Spirit. To Passover pride in place of humility. In listening to the Passion of Jesus, we should ask ourselves where am I in all of this drama of life? Am I like Pontius Pilate, in that, I refuse to recognise Jesus before me in the Eucharist. Do I sit on a throne of judgement towards my neighbour? Like Pilate, do I wash my hands of those in need? Do I see and understand that my sins binds the hands of Jesus and the Church today? Do I realise when I sin that I am denying Christ, like Judas and Peter? Do I make any effort to genuinely change?

### DO I CARRY MY SHARE?

We have to be careful not to imitate the soldiers by mocking Jesus. For example, to take the Holy Name of Jesus Christ in vain, is to seriously mock Jesus and spit on His divine character. We are asked to willingly take a share in the carrying of the Suffering Cross, like Simon, and not complain bitterly, but offer it up to God for the conversion of the unbelievers. Our sufferings offered to God become redemptive, which means that we can break the evil influence of Satan in the hearts of humanity. St. Peter tells us that we *will have to suffer only for a little while* in order to enter Eternal Glory in Christ (1 Peter 5:10-11). None of us can avoid the Cross, as seen with the Good Thief, who hung on his cross before entering Heaven. We are called to be courageous like Veronica, who came forward to wipe the dirt from the Holy Face of Jesus. The dirt symbolises the sins of humanity. We imitate Veronica by wiping away sin from our lives through repentance.

### WHERE IS MY HEART?

Those faithful who followed Jesus were not paralysed by fear in the confusion, but entrusted themselves to Jesus and did not abandon Him. Redemptive suffering is a divine currency that will purchase us Eternal Life. Jesus willingly entered into His Suffering Passion, in order to purchase us New Life beginning here on earth. This is Salvation of the soul, but it only works, if we collaborate with the Divine Graces God sends us from Heaven, through the hands of Our Lady. Holy Week demands our attention to repent, by changing our lives for the better, before we depart this world. We should all ponder on the moment of death, when our soul Passes-over from this world to the next and experiences the salvation process of Divine Justice and Judgement. It'll be a day of disaster for those not prepared in spirit.

### WE ARE TO BE ATHLETES OF DISCIPLINE

The Palm branch in Christianity is a symbol of Victory over Sin and Death. It is a sign of Peace. A palm branch was awarded to victorious athletes in ancient Greece and Rome. We are all called to be Athletes of Discipline. Called to spiritually work-out and train in order to win the race against the unknown earthly time given to us to prepare. To do this we must be spiritually fit, through exercising our faith. We must ensure to Pass - over the finishing line, by keeping to God's Rules. All athletes are subject to a referee. To win the spiritual race qualifies us to wear the Crown of Eternal Life. This Crown will never wither. We have to Passover temptation and sin in life first. Palm branches also represent Victory of the Spirit over the flesh (Rev 7:9). God Bless, Fr. Brendan.