



St Bede's Catholic College



**Short Liturgies and reflections
to help guide us through
Holy Week and Easter**



The week preceding Easter is known as Holy Week.

It begins on Palm Sunday and is traditionally a week of sombre reflection on the events preceding Jesus' death: his triumphant entry into Jerusalem; his betrayal by Judas; his Last Supper with his twelve apostles; his arrest, crucifixion and death; and his burial in a tomb.

These short liturgies and reflections should take no longer than 10 minutes, and are designed to help you during this week, especially as we will be unable to physically celebrate them in our churches this year.

Traditionally, we think about the final of Jesus to his death during this time.

This is called the Stations of the Cross

We have included a short version of this as well, which you may want to think about, particularly on Good Friday, when that journey took place.



We have also included a liturgy for Easter Sunday, to celebrate the joyful resurrection of Jesus.

This year, more than any other it is important for us to have Hope.

The Easter story is a message of hope.

Hope tells us that we will not be overwhelmed. Hope tells us that the light is always there, even when the tunnel seems never-ending.

We hope you find them useful.



Palm Sunday is exactly one week before Easter. Palm Sunday recalls Jesus' very public entry in to the city of Jerusalem.

Today we hear how crowds of people welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem shortly before he was crucified. We use palms to remind us of how the people cut branches and laid them in the road before him as they shouted with joy.

Opening prayer: God of joy, we welcome you into our lives as the people of Jerusalem welcomed Jesus, with respect, love and happiness. Help us to remember that you are in all people and to try to make them feel welcome. Amen.

Gospel: Matthew 21:1-11

As Jesus and his disciples approached Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage at the Mount of Olives. There Jesus sent two of the disciples on ahead with these instructions: "Go to the village there ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied up with her colt beside her. Untie them and bring them to me. And if anyone says anything, tell him, 'The Master needs them'; and then he will let them go at once."

This happened in order to make what the prophet had said come true:

"Tell the city of Zion,

Look, your king is coming to you!

He is humble and rides on a donkey and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

So the disciples went and did what Jesus had told them to do: they brought the donkey and the colt, threw their cloaks over them, and Jesus got on. A large crowd of people spread their cloaks on the road while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds walking in front of Jesus and those walking behind began to shout, "Praise to David's Son! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise be to God!"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was thrown into an uproar. "Who is he?" the people asked.

"This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee," the crowds answered.



Reflection: Today is a special day, called Palm Sunday.

In the gospel reading we heard how Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey. The donkey was a very humble animal – not very special for such a special person like Jesus.

Why do you think he chose a donkey?

If Jesus were to arrive here today, do you think he would ride on a donkey?

What would he ride or drive?

All of the people were so happy to see Jesus that they laid their cloaks on the floor and cut branches from palm trees to lay before him to show their respect. This is why today is called Palm Sunday and why we wave palms. They shouted to show their joy and praise for God.

**Why do you think the crowds were so full of happiness and praise for Jesus?
What would you have done if you were in the crowd?**

Think again about what it would be like if Jesus arrived here today.

What would you do to welcome Jesus if he arrived here today?

God made all of us, no matter where in the world that we come from. Jesus is in all of us. So every time we meet someone and we welcome them, we are welcoming Jesus.

Jesus is in all people, so we should treat all people with the respect, love and kindness that we would show to Jesus. We should try to welcome all people into our lives and treat them as we would like to be treated.

As we begin this most special of weeks let's try to welcome all people as we would welcome Jesus.

Closing prayer: God of truth, we thank you for sending us your Son Jesus. Open our hearts so that we may welcome him in others and bring us together to make the world a fairer place. Amen.



Maundy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper—a Passover meal that Jesus shared with his disciples the night before his death. Before the meal, Jesus surprised his friends by washing the feet of every person, a task that was normally done by a servant. He wanted to show his followers that they should love one another in humble ways.

During the meal, Jesus broke bread and offered his followers wine, saying

“This is my body, given up for you.”

We consider this event to have been the institution of the Eucharist

Today also marks the beginning of the Triduum. 3 Days of preparation leading to Easter.

Opening Prayer: Lord we have gathered together in your name to remember the events of the first Maundy Thursday. Draw us closer to you, Inspire us with your love, And fill us with your Spirit, That we might be ready to serve you with our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Gospel: John 13: 1-15

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”

Jesus replied, “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”

“No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.”

Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

“Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”

Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.” For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you

A reflection



Why did you wash their feet?
I don't understand, it makes no sense.

Why did you do something so demeaning, so distasteful, when you did not have to?

Why humble yourself and wash the feet of your own disciples?

You are the Messiah, it makes no sense for you, of all people, to do something that should be done by the least of all people, not by the greatest. It is not what we want our Messiahs to do.

Unless... unless we have got it wrong and that,
somehow this is a measure of what Messiah means?
Not that it is defined in greatness but that somehow,
in your world the first will be last, and the greatest,
least and servant of all?

But if we are to follow you, does it mean that we must follow your example too?
Are you suggesting that we too should make ourselves humble?
That we must wash the feet of the people whom we would rather ignore, or scapegoat,
or deride?

Must we too become the servants of the least among us?
the refugee,
the disabled,
the homeless,
the addicted,
the anti-social,
the child?

Was that what all of this was about?
To try and put us in our rightful place,
not at the centre of our own world,
but at the centre of yours,
where we are no longer the most important person?
Is that it?

Were you trying to teach us this simple truth:
that other people, all other people, should matter too?
Is that why you washed their feet?

Closing Prayer: Christ Jesus, you call us to walk humbly with you and to serve one another in love. Inspired by your example may we reach out to one another, tending to one another's needs.

Lord Jesus, how kind and loving you are to give me your sacred body and precious blood as food for my soul. Lord, unworthy as I am, I am yours. Amen



Today, on Good Friday, we remember the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not an easy story to hear. It is filled with betrayal, violence and sorrow. Yet, we are reminded that, Christ's death is not without purpose. He dies for us and for our salvation:

"On him lies a punishment that brings us peace, and through his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

Today, as we pray and fast, we ask forgiveness for all that we have done wrong and recommit ourselves to living as Christ calls us to do.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross so that he might draw the whole world to himself. Grant that we, who glory in this death for our salvation, may also glory in his call to take up our cross and follow him; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Passion of Jesus: read The Passion, on the next page.

Think about how Jesus would have felt as he suffered.

Think about why God allowed this to happen.

Reflection: Upon first glance, little of this story appears victorious or uplifting. But the crucifixion of Jesus holds life-transforming power and hope for all who believe! For upon the cross, God showed the true depth of his love and just how far he would go to save a world lost in sin. Jesus proclaimed God's forgiveness from the cross as he was dying. He forgave Peter, who had denied him, and those who caused his death, and he will forgive us for all that we do that hurts others.

That's why Good Friday is good.

Closing Prayer: Almighty Father, Look with mercy on this your family
For which our Lord Jesus Christ was content to be betrayed
And given up into the hands of sinners And to suffer death upon the cross;
who is alive and glorified now with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus was brought before Pilate the governor, who asked him, **“Are you the King of the Jews?”** **“Those are your words!”** Jesus answered. And when the chief priests and leaders brought their charges against him, he did not say a thing. Pilate asked him **“Don’t you hear what crimes they say you have done?”** But Jesus did not say anything, and the governor was greatly amazed. During Passover the governor always freed as prisoner chosen by the people. At that time a criminal named Barabbas was in jail. So when the crowd came together, Pilate asked them, **“Which prisoner do you want me to set free? Do you want Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?”** Pilate knew that the leaders had brought Jesus to him because they were jealous. While Pilate was judging the case, his wife sent him a message. It said, **“Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man. I have had nightmares because of him.”** But the chief priests and the leaders convinced the crowds to ask for Barabbas to be set free and for Jesus to be killed. Pilate asked the crowd again, **“Which of these two men do you want me to set free?”** **“Barabbas!”** they replied. Pilate asked them, **“What am I to do with Jesus, who is called the Messiah?”** They all yelled, **“Nail him to a cross!”** Pilate answered, **“But what crime has he done?”** **“Nail him to a cross!”** they yelled even louder. Pilate saw that there was nothing he could do and that the people were starting to riot. So he took some water and washed his hands in front of them and said, **“I won’t have anything to do with killing this man. You are the ones doing it!”** Everybody answered, **“We and our descendants will take the blame for his death!”** Pilate set Barabbas free. Then he ordered his soldiers to beat Jesus with a whip and nail him to a cross. The governor’s soldiers led Jesus into the fortress and brought together the rest of the troops. They stripped off Jesus’ clothes and put a scarlet robe on him. They made a crown out of thorn branches and placed it on his head, and they put a stick in his right hand. The soldiers kneeled down and pretended to worship him. They made fun of him and shouted, **“Hey, you king of the Jews!”** Then they spit on him. They took the stick from him and beat him on the head with it. When the soldiers had finished making fun of Jesus, they took off the robe. They put his own clothes back on him and led him off to be nailed to a cross. On the way they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and they forced him to carry Jesus’ cross. They came to a place named Golgotha, which means “Place of the Skull”. There they gave Jesus some wine mixed with a drug to ease the pain. But when Jesus tasted what it was, he refused to drink it. The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross and gambled to see who would get his clothes. Then they sat down to guard him. Above his head they put a sign that told why he was nailed there. It said, **“This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.”** The soldiers also nailed two criminals on crosses one to the right of Jesus and the other to his left. People who passed by said terrible things about Jesus. They shook their heads and shouted, **“So you’re the one who claimed you could tear down the temple and build it again in three days! If you are God’s Son, save yourself and come down from the cross!”** The chief priests, the leaders, and the teachers of the Law of Moses also made fun of Jesus. They said, **“He saved others, but he can’t save himself. If he is the king of Israel, he should come down from the cross! Then we will believe him. He trusted God, so let God save him, if he wants to. He even said he was God’s Son.”** The two criminals also said cruel things to Jesus. At noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until three o’clock. Then about that time Jesus shouted, **“Eli, Eli, Lema sabachthani?”** which means, **“My God, my God, why have you deserted me?”** Some of the people standing there heard Jesus and said, **“He’s calling for Elijah.”** One of them at once ran and grabbed a sponge. He soaked it in wine, then put it on a stick and held it up to Jesus. Others said, **“Wait! Let’s see if Elijah will come and save him.”** Once again Jesus shouted, and then he died. At once the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, and rocks split apart. Graves opened, and many of God’s people were raised to life. Then after Jesus had risen to life, they came out of their graves and went into the holy city, where many people saw them. The officer and the soldiers guarding Jesus felt the earthquake and saw everything else that happened. They were frightened and said, **“This man really was God’s Son!”**

The Stations of The Cross

The Stations of the Cross are a sad but very special journey that we are going to take with Jesus. We are going to think about and pray about everything that happened to Jesus on his way to the cross. We're going to ask him to come into our hearts as we journey together.

1. Jesus is condemned to death

O Jesus! You are so meek and uncomplaining, teach me to accept things even when it isn't always what I wanted.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

2. Jesus receives the cross

O Jesus! This cross should be mine, not yours; it was my mistakes that crucified you. Thankyou for taking on my mistakes.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

3. Jesus falls the first time

O Jesus! By this first fall, never let me fall into doing the wrong thing.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

4. Jesus meets His Mother

O Jesus! May no distraction, however important, keep me from following you.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

5. Simon of Cyrene carries the cross

O Jesus! Simon was forced to assist you; may I assist others without complaint

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

6. Veronica wipes Jesus' face with her veil

O Jesus! you imprinted your face upon Veronica's veil; stamp it also upon my heart forever.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

7. Jesus falls the second time

O Jesus! By your second fall, preserve me, from repeating my mistakes.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

8. Jesus meets the daughters of Jerusalem

O Jesus! The best thing I could hear you say: “you have loved us so much, that you will always forgive us”

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

9. Jesus falls the third time

O Jesus! When I am tired and things go against me, be my strength and my guide.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

10. Jesus is stripped of His garments

O Jesus! You stood bravely, and didn't hate those hurting you, teach me to stand up for good and truth.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

11. Crucifixion: Jesus is nailed to the cross

O Jesus! You forgave your enemies; my God, teach me to forgive others and forget what they have done.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

12. Jesus dies on the cross

O Jesus! You are dying but your heart still beats with love for all your children.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

13. Jesus' body is removed from the cross

O Jesus! Your Mother was sad as she received you into her arms; teach me to remember when I'm sad that you are there for me.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

14. Jesus is laid in the tomb.

O Jesus! Make my heart a fit place for you to live, especially when things seem so hard and difficult to understand.

Response: Jesus, we love you. Thank you for dying for us and all the world

All: Our Father....



Today is a very special day.

It's Easter Sunday when Jesus rose from the dead. We celebrate and think of new life.

Opening prayer: God of life, we celebrate the rising of your Son today and the new life that you bring into the world. We thank you for all the good things that you have given to us. Help us to share them with others. Amen.

Gospel: John 20:1-9

Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the entrance. She went running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

Then Peter and the other disciple went to the tomb. The two of them were running, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and saw the linen wrappings, but he did not go in. Behind him came Simon Peter, and he went straight into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there and the cloth which had been round Jesus' head. It was not lying with the linen wrappings but was rolled up by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in; he saw and believed. (They still did not understand the scripture which said that he must rise from death.)

Gospel reflection: think about the reading that you have just heard.

Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb where Jesus has been buried, but when she gets there the body has gone.

How do you think she felt when she realised this?

She fetches Simon Peter and John and tells them that Jesus has gone. They reach the tomb and see that it is empty. The disciples finally realise that Jesus has risen from the dead and they believe in him. They know that he is the Son of God.

Jesus is risen from the dead, giving new life to us all.



How does that make you feel?

Easter is a time of joy and celebration.

How will you celebrate Easter today?

Around the world people celebrate Easter in different ways. For instance, in Brazil people eat a special food called paçoca, which is prepared by mixing crushed nuts and other ingredients together into a paste.

In Ethiopia people wear traditional white clothes called yabesha libs and eat special sourdough bread called dabo. They bake enough of this bread to offer a slice to everyone who comes to visit the house.

Although we live in different countries, and speak different languages, and eat different food, we are all God's children. We are part of one big global family and we are called to care for one another as sisters and brothers.

We are filled with hope today because Jesus' resurrection shows us that nothing is impossible for God.

We hope we can help each other to be the best people we can be and to live full and happy lives, wherever we are in the world.

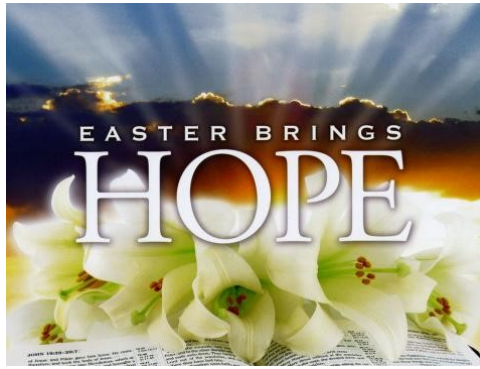
We pray that through God's grace we can care for one another and work together to make the world a better place for us all, and especially for those of us who are poor.

What is your hope for the world this Easter?

How can we make it happen?

God fills us with hope on this Easter Sunday and so we pray together:

Closing prayer: Living God, we know that all things are possible for you. Fill us with hope for a future where all people may live their lives to the full. Inspire us to work together to make this change happen. Amen.



It's not uncommon for people to say they're pessimists. They claim that it's just the way they are made. For them, it seems like they naturally only see the negative side of life.

We believe that nobody had more reason to be pessimistic than Jesus' followers in the days after his death. For them, their lives had lost their meaning, whether in their personal lives, their relationships, or the community to which they belonged. Everything had been destroyed. They had nothing left to live for. But that's why we believe that knowing the whole Easter story is so important. Good Friday, the day on which Jesus was killed, the day when the world collapsed for his followers, must always move on to Easter Sunday, the day when he was raised back to life.

In the days, weeks, months and years following the resurrection of Jesus, his followers lived their lives with the belief that, whatever the world threw at them, Jesus was alive and nothing could dampen that truth. It's the same belief that we hold today, that the Easter Sunday resurrection transforms each new day. Easter Sunday means that it's possible to live as optimists rather than pessimists.

You may share that Christian belief. You may have a different belief, or maybe none at all. But for all of us, there is a basic principle that we can adopt: we can choose to live our lives in the light of the good things that have happened to us rather than in the darkness of our mistakes and unfortunate experiences. We can choose to be optimists rather than pessimists.

This year, more than any in our lifetime, we are all in danger of only seeing the negative side of things. But there is hope. The Easter story is a message of hope. Hope tells us that we will not be overwhelmed. Hope tells us that the light is always there, even when the tunnel seems never-ending.

Hope reminds us that 'Sunday' always comes.

Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you that the Easter story is full of hope.

Thank you that light makes a difference to darkness.

Even in the worst of times, help us to see that there is always hope.

Amen.

