



St Theresa's Presbytery
High Lane
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Monday of Holy Week 2020

Dear Friends

We have started the most unusual Holy Week the Church has ever undertaken. This is going to be a Holy Week like no other, but it is a Holy Week that we will continue to celebrate with great love and devotion. We will journey with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ through the events that lead to our Salvation.

Yesterday I celebrated the most subdued Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion that I can ever remember. No Blessing and palm leaves, or crosses, these have been purchased and will be kept until next year, no procession into Church from the Parish Centre singing the great processional hymns of Palm Sunday, no solemn reading of the Passion with multiple voices, all rather sad and lonely; but The Mass was offered, with many of you tuning in via the YouTube channel, many of you making your Spiritual Communion, all of you taken to the altar of the Lord during that celebration. And Holy Week continues.

I have been reflecting on the events, the liturgies that we celebrate this week, and perhaps more than ever before we may be able to feel a special closeness to Jesus as he undergoes his Passion. It is often said that our Lord faced loss of support, loss of friends, great isolation during the first Holy Week. Many of us may be feeling the same sense of loss, lack of support, great isolation, some of us can begin to feel in some sense what Jesus felt. If this is so perhaps this Holy Week will help us feel especially close to our Lord as we journey with him through these last days and hours of his life. This may well turn out to be a God given opportunity for us to identify with our Lord in his suffering and death that he undergoes for you and for me, so that we might have life, and life in all its fullness.

I intend to keep the Cross very central to my devotions this week, and I urge you to do the same. Yesterday we listened to the Passion according to Matthew; and again on Good Friday we will hear the Passion read from the Gospel of John. I know the Passion reading is very long, and when read by just one voice can sound monotonous (I'm sorry about this) but please listen with devotion, place yourself right there in the crowd. Remember as you listen that Jesus suffered all of this, for love of you and me. We can draw many fruits from standing at the foot of the cross, on contemplating this great act of self-giving love, not least our own capacity to take up our cross every single day and follow Christ. Maybe this is the cross of isolation, the cross feeling a little bit down, or the cross of full blown depression at being caught up in a situation that we cannot control. We do not carry our cross alone, because He bears our cross with us. We are never truly alone. It's the one thing that gets me

through offering the Mass in an empty Church building. It's not just the idea that some of you are watching the live broadcast of the Mass, but that the Church is full at every offering of the Mass, filled with the presence of the Angels and Saints, and the knowledge that I carry each and every one of you in my heart as I make my way to the altar of God.

My dear friends may you feel this week God's overwhelming love for you, may you experience His blessing on you, your families and your friends and neighbours. Please pray for me as I pray for you.

With my love and blessing

Fr Lee