OUR HOLIEST OF WEEKS

PALM SUNDAY – Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel! Hosanna in the highest!

In the Christian calendar, Palm Sunday is the beginning of Holy Week. (April 9 this year) During this week we are reminded to reflect upon the meaning of Jesus’ death on the Cross that took place nearly two millennia ago at a place which still remains the epicenter of religious and political violence today.

Jesus had gone to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover with his disciples when he was caught in a web of events that would eventually lead to his death. The crowds who were waving palm branches and proclaiming him the messianic king, would only, five days later, cry for his execution.

The New Testament weaves the central events of this week into one overarching story of redemptive history. It declares that the eternal God of creation has come into our world, has stepped into our time in the person of a Nazarene named Jesus. What happened one Friday in Jerusalem was not ‘once upon a time’ but ‘once for all time’. Christians are called to follow Jesus on his lonely trek from the Upper Room, through Gethsemane to Calvary. Something happened some two thousand years ago, something so shattering that death is now no longer allowed to have the final say.

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week are days of waiting, preparation and anticipation.

God of unwavering love, how do I “celebrate” the passion and death of Jesus? I often want to look the other way and not watch, not stay with Jesus in His suffering. Give me the strength to see His love with honesty and compassion and to feel deeply your own forgiveness and mercy for me.

Help me to “celebrate” this week by going to confession and experiencing that forgiveness and mercy as I wait and prepare for Easter.
“Jesus came to Simon Peter who said to him, “Master, are you going to wash my feet?” Jesus answered and said to him,” What I am doing you do not understand now but you will understand later.” Peter said to him, “You will never wash my feet!”

“Jesus said to Peter, ‘unless I wash you, you will have no inheritance with me.’ Simon Peter said to him, “Master, not only my feet but my head and hands as well.’

‘Do you realize what I have done for you? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Master’ and rightly so, for indeed I am. If, therefore, the Master and Teacher, has washed your feet, you ought to wash one another’s feet.”

(John 13: 6-9 12-14)

“Brothers and Sisters, I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night he was handed over, took bread and, after he had given thanks, broke it and said, ‘This is my Body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, also the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is a new covenant in my Blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes.”

(I Cor. 11: 23-26)

On this day, Jesus teaches not so much with words, as with signs. He shares bread and wine with his disciples — his very Body and Blood. And then he kneels before them and washes their feet. And he tells them, “I have given you an example to follow. The message is clear. Eucharist and service are one and the same. Those who share at Christ’s table must also kneel at one another’s feet.”
GOOD FRIDAY
Prayer in the Steps of the Passion

Most dear Jesus, filled with sorrow during the agony in the garden, covered with a sweat of blood while praying, have mercy on us, O Lord.

Most dear Jesus, delivered into the hands of the wicked by a kiss, bound like a robber, and abandoned by your disciples, have mercy on us, O Lord.

Most dear Jesus, condemned to death by an unjust Council, taken as an evildoer before Pilate, and ridiculed by the wicked Herod, have mercy on us, O Lord.

Most dear Jesus, publicly shorn of your garments and most cruelly scourged at the Pillar, have mercy on us, O Lord.

Most dear Jesus, crowned with thorns, beaten and blindfolded, clothed in rich purple, and mocked, have mercy on us, O Lord.

Most dear Jesus, burdened with the weight of the Cross and led to the place of execution like a lamb to the slaughter, have mercy on us, O Lord.

Most dear Jesus, reckoned with the wicked, blasphemed and derided, and given gall to drink to mitigate your pain, have mercy on us, O Lord.

Most dear Jesus, dying on the Cross in the presence of Mary, pierced with a lance that drew blood and water from your side, have mercy on us, O Lord.

Most dear Jesus, taken down and placed in the arms of your Sorrowful Mother, have mercy on us, O Lord.

Most dear Jesus, horribly bruised and marked with five wounds, anointed for burial and placed in a tomb, have mercy on us, O Lord.

We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee, because by your Holy Cross you have redeemed the world.
**HOLY SATURDAY**

“Brothers and sisters: Are you unaware that we who are baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with Him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.” Romans 6: 3-6

May the newly baptized and newly confirmed, as of this evening, find in the Church the meaning and happiness for which their hearts long.

**ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN!**

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb and we don't know where they put him.”

So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb...

When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths, but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. (John 20: 1-4, 6-8)

Risen Lord, thank you for the gift of a new day, of a new life, of a new forever. You give hope to us and you give meaning to us. We know nothing can stop us from loving You, from serving You, from following You, from listening to You. Thank you.

Let our spirits awaken, for Easter morning is a new beginning!
**APRIL PREPARES HER GREEN TRAFFIC LIGHT AND THE WORLD THINKS “GO!”**

It’s almost here – It’s safe to say.
I saw a Crocus yesterday.
It’s colors bright, a lovely thing.
My heart rejoiced!
It looks like Spring!

**PRAYER FOR THE CARE OF THE EARTH**

God our Father and Creator, we give you thanks for the wonder of creation which inspires us, the fruit of the Earth which feeds us, the beauty of nature which grounds us, and the joy of life which gives us hope.

Heal the places where your creation has been marred, and restore all creatures to the splendor of your glory, that all may delight once again in your goodness.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**MEAL BLESSING**

Blessed are you, Lord our God, king of the universe:
You have triumphed over sin and death in the dying and rising of your beloved Son.

We ask you to bless this meal, those who have prepared it, and those who share it.
May your saving love turn the world’s famine into feasting, so that all people may find new life in your Risen Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Divine Mercy Sunday – April 23 this year**

Help me, O Lord, that my heart may be merciful, so that I myself may feel all the sufferings of my neighbor. I will refuse my heart to no one.
I will be sincere even with those who, I know, will abuse my kindness. And I will lock myself up in the most merciful Heart of Jesus.
I will bear my own suffering in silence.
May your mercy, O Lord, rest upon me.

You, Yourself, command me to exercise the three degrees of mercy:
1. The act of mercy of whatever kind. 2. The word of mercy. 3. If I cannot show mercy by deeds or words I can always do so by prayer. O my Jesus, transform me into Yourself for You can do all things.

**Words by Pope Francis:**
“Christ’s Cross, embraced with love, never leads to sadness, but to the joy of having been saved and doing a life for all the Church.”

**Those Who Recently Found Eternal Rest**
Ruth Wegesin
Marcella Niemeyer
William Calvelage
Ken Rode
Tom Miller
Rosie Bonifas
Bettie Bohnlein
Celeste Bushnell
APRIL, MONTH OF THE EUCHARIST

“When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then.
When you look at the Sacred Host, you understand how much Jesus loves you now.”
(Mother Teresa of Calcutta)

We have been given a great gift, the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, also known to us as Holy Communion, Blessed Sacrament, Lord’s Supper, Bread of Life.
The Church and the world have a great need for the Eucharist. Let us make Eucharist the center of our lives with daily praise and adoration, and reception of Holy Communion whenever possible.

How appropriate that we are preparing the second-graders of our parish to make their First Holy Communion on Sunday, May 7. Let us pray for the following students as they prepare to receive Jesus for the first time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drew Baldauf</th>
<th>Claire Geier</th>
<th>Claire Martz</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eleanor Becker</td>
<td>Amber Gerdeman</td>
<td>Christ Elie N’Gussan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brock Bender</td>
<td>Owen Gilles</td>
<td>Nathan Ostendorf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie Bewsey</td>
<td>Andrew Gossard</td>
<td>Avery Pohlman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Bockey</td>
<td>Madison Hablitzel</td>
<td>Harry Ricker III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Bockey</td>
<td>Madelyn Haehn</td>
<td>Colby Schindler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trent Bonifas</td>
<td>Nathan Hemker</td>
<td>Lillian Schnee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trayce Brickner</td>
<td>Lila Jackson</td>
<td>Elijah Stant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsie Brotherwood</td>
<td>Megan Kerner</td>
<td>Kaylie Sunderhaus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serenity Burns</td>
<td>Chloe Kill</td>
<td>Aiden Swick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith Cross</td>
<td>Mya Kill</td>
<td>Dean Trentman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah DeVelvis</td>
<td>Ayden Klinger</td>
<td>Briley Wertenberger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam Druckemiller</td>
<td>Alexis Landwehr</td>
<td>Jackson Wiechart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logan Duncan</td>
<td>Antonia Laskay</td>
<td>Makenna Wieging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Elwer</td>
<td>Gianna Lee</td>
<td>Cole Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anika Freewalt</td>
<td>Hailey Logan</td>
<td>Lauren Wiltsie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garion Fuerst</td>
<td>Skyleigh Loomis</td>
<td>Christian Young</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

O Jesus, You have given us the greatest gift of all, the Holy Eucharist.
Be with us as we prepare these children to receive You for the first time.
O Sacred Heart of Jesus, protect these young souls from the assaults of evil, strengthen their faith, increase their love and endow them with all the virtues that will make them worthy to receive You.
We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

O Sacrament most holy! O Sacrament divine!
All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine!