



# St Patrick's Cathedral Newsletter



T: 4637 1500 F: 4637 1511  
Email: [admin@stpats.org.au](mailto:admin@stpats.org.au)  
[www.stpats.org.au](http://www.stpats.org.au)

Office hours: 9am-4pm Mon-Thu 9am-3pm on Friday

Administrator/Priest Director STM: Fr. Michael O'Brien  
Associate Pastors: Fr Hal Ranger & Fr. Thomas Duncan



St Patrick's, in communion with St Saviour's Primary School - Madonna Sleba (4637 1555)  
St Saviour's College - Sharon Collins (4637 1600)

We acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of this place, the Jarowair and Giabal peoples.



## PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD [Year A]

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April/5<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

**First Reading:** Isaiah 50:4-7 I did not cover my face against insult and I know I will not be ashamed.

**Responsorial Psalm:** My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? [Psalm 21]

**Second Reading:** Philippians 2:6-11 He humbled himself to become like us and God raised him on high.

**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 above all other names.

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

**Gospel:** Matthew: 26:14-27:66 The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

### What Connects You to the Passion of Christ?

This weekend we would normally be celebrating Palm Sunday, receiving blessed palms and, as my mother used to always do, put it inside her Mass book to remind her throughout the year of the importance of Easter in our lives. You are invited this year to find a branch or leaf from your garden to symbolise this celebration. At the Seminary we used to put them outside our rooms along the corridor, so as we came and went during the week we were reminded what the week was about! Watch the Mass on the Diocesan Website and hold your branch and be connected to this time and to each other. There is a prayer service and you will find that link on the St Pat's website. Also attached is the Bishop's letter for Easter – a reminder that we are all Easter People.

On the following pages is the imaginative story of Jonathan which I thought was a gentle way into thinking about the narrative of Christ's death that we hear in the gospel today. When Mel Gibson put out the movie, "The Passion", many people asked me "Have you seen the movie?" to which my normal reply was, "No, but I've read the book!!" When we read this year's version of the Passion from Matthew we are invited into his world of understanding. Please read it through. When we explore the people in the narrative we are invited to place it not only alongside our own story, but more to overlay it – like the old overhead projector transparency – the narrative in its own way brings understanding to our fractured story. When we look at each "player" we are drawn to see ourselves in them. So I invite you to read the passion and use these as starting points for reflection:

**Peter's story** is one of betrayal, than a moment of realisation and later, forgiveness. We take a moment to remember those times in our lives where we have said or done the wrong thing in relation to another person. When, maybe we have failed to support or stand up for someone. Peter's story reminds us that sometimes the highs and lows in life can somehow strengthen us. Hold up to God those experiences that seemed devastating at the time, but in hindsight brought a renewed sense of strength in who we are.....

**Judas' role** is complex and sad. We take a moment to remember that in a mysterious way, his betrayal to the Romans was part of the needed power of Christ's story. A version of Judas' story recalls that he betrayed Jesus, knowing that a revolution was on its way, so as to have Jesus put in prison and therefore relatively safe. It also meant he wouldn't be part of the violence that Judas thought was coming. So he handed Jesus over. Hold up to God those times we have tried to do the right thing, with the best motives, but for whatever reason it has not worked out for the best.....

**Joseph (Jesus' father)** At the time of the crucifixion we have no mention of Joseph, so the assumption is that by this time Joseph had died. Joseph guided Jesus throughout his life, moulding him, teaching him, loving him and leaving him with his imprint in some real way. Hold up to God all those people who are no longer with you, but have been "Joseph" for you.....

**Mary Magdalene** has loved Jesus from the moment their eyes met – at the lowest and most needy time of her life. It is no surprise that she follows Jesus to the final moments of his life. To say she is thankful to him for accepting her as she was, and respecting her life journey seems trite – she loved him. Hold up to God all those people who you love for walking the journey with you this day – those who accept you – warts and all – someone who respects you and whom you love in return.....

I invite you to again read the gospel and reflect on how do the **Crowd, Soldiers, Joseph of Arimathea, Robbers** and others overlay with your life experience. Spend this time with God as we celebrate the coming days. As the government likes to remind us - "We are all in this together", let us keep everyone in our prayers and in our hearts and in our actions of love to be there for anyone who needs us. Keep well and God Bless.

Fr. Michael



## Easter Message 2020

At the beginning of Lent, I commented: "What a start to the year!" Tragedies with families devastated through the actions of others, bushfires, drought and coronavirus, which we now call COVID-19.

Many have commented that we are in uncharted waters. Federal and State laws have been enacted limiting the movement of peoples and even restricting the celebration of Mass, Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals. Health Authorities remind us of the necessity for these restrictions so that lives may be saved and the Pandemic overcome.

In these times may we truly be faith-filled and hope-filled people.

Because of the many necessary restrictions placed upon us at this time, you will not have been able to be personally present in our Cathedral or our Parish Churches to celebrate Palm Sunday and the Ceremonies of Holy Week and especially the wonderful celebration of the Easter Vigil. Hopefully we are united in Spirit and participating as fully as possible in prayer and/or via modern media as we journey with Jesus through his Passion, Death and Glorious Resurrection on Easter Day.

We should remember that we are an Easter people. May the light of Christ shine brightly in each of us.

We pray for those who are anxious, suffering or grieving. We especially pray for protection for those who care for the sick.

Pope Francis urges us to reflect on the healing waters of our baptism, through which we find salvation and have new life in the Risen Christ.

Each of us has unique treasures and opportunities to give witness to the Risen Lord. Bring out that treasure! In the course of a day, or a week, we find ourselves engaging with different people and groups, at present, if not face-to-face, then by via modern technology. With the Grace of God, may we find opportunities to share the joyous message of Jesus' Resurrection. May we respond generously and share the love and the gifts that we have received. We should do this without asking about the cost or seeking to receive something ourselves in return.

I wish you every blessing in this season of light and hope. May the light of the risen Christ shine brightly in each of us so that others may see that Christ is truly Risen!

Rejoice and be glad for the Lord is Risen! He is indeed Risen!

May we remain in, and grow in the love of the Risen Lord and may that be seen by our care for each other.

Most Reverend Robert M McGuckin

Bishop of Toowoomba

PO Box 756, Toowoomba Qld 4350

Tel: (+61 7) 4632 4277 • Fax: (+61 7) 4639 2251 • Email: [bishop@twb.catholic.org.au](mailto:bishop@twb.catholic.org.au) • [www.twb.catholic.org.au](http://www.twb.catholic.org.au)

✠ **We remember in our prayers all those who have died recently:** John Connolly (brother of Fr. Brian), Patricia Anderson, and those who have died from Covid 19 in Australia and beyond. *May perpetual light shine upon them, may they rest in peace.*

✠ **We hold in our hearts the memories of those whose anniversaries occur at this time:** Matthew Dwyer.

✠ **For all those who are ill in our community, especially** Fr. Don Murray, Christine [Faus] Barron, Hughie Boyce, Greta Berge, Matt Vlietstra, Jean Denison, Jo Tuite, Dr Peter Reiter, Elijah Rolls, Hayden Smith, Rita Berry, Juanita Umipig, Maria Brown, Patricia Whyte (nee Stark), Margaret Walker, Rita Blacker, Kristina Dawidowicz, Nora Machin, Mary Allen, George Pardon, Tina Hobson, Bev Boundy, Roslyn Pardon [nee Kearney], Joanne Essey [Sydney], Braxton Rayner, Kate Gibbs, Max Shearer, Saturnino Bustamante, Hannah Marie Marasigan, Stephanie Shine, Andrew Supple, Mary-Ann Hine, Kathy Allan, John Morgan, Patricia McCracken, Reggie James, Morgan O'Brien, Teresita Pamulaklakin, and all those suffering the effects of Covid-19.

### *A Story to Ponder, by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson.....*

If you were to ask each man and woman who joined in the death watch that "Good" Friday, each could tell you of some personal connection to Jesus. There's John the beloved disciple, with Mary, Jesus' mother. Here are Lazarus and Mary and Martha, Jesus' friends from Bethany. The woman taken in adultery is here, too, in shock, and dozens of others. Each has a connection to the man crucified on the center cross. Some remember a healing, others his life-giving words by the shore of Galilee. Others recall a second chance the Master extended to them. Each has a connection.

They stand in clumps, here and there on that stark hill, drawn together by the sheer terror of what is happening. Two words describe what they feel: appalled and shattered.

But off by himself, as close as he could get to the base of the cross, is a tall, gangly sixteen-year-old with thick black hair and an angular jaw that makes him appear decisive, though at heart he is a dreamer and thinker.

But now his eyes are hard and narrow, staring at the blood that is dripping from the rough-hewn crossbar above. It has made a glistening pool in the rocky surface below, and each time another drop falls and breaks the surface of the puddle, Jonathan winces.

Jonathan's connection to Jesus goes back a full three years to Jericho and the Jordan when he was thirteen. Jonathan was a shepherd who had grown up out-of-doors, familiar with each hill and vale on the Jericho plain, for he had grazed his father's sheep there since he had been a lad. Of all the shepherd boys, Jonathan had always been curious about God. He was always pestering the town rabbi with questions.

That same hunger to learn explained Jonathan's presence one sultry day when John the Baptist had been preaching and baptizing at the nearby River Jordan. Whenever he could slip away and leave the sheep with his brothers, Jonathan would run down to the Jordan in long, loping strides, until he reached the crowds at the riverside.

With a voice that seemed to carry for miles, the Prophet was saying, "You blind and thoughtless people! You live as if there is no tomorrow. Don't you know that the axe is already at the root of the trees? Don't you know that every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire? Don't you know?"

The Prophet had a kind of desperateness about him as he would call out to the multitudes that stood hushed along the banks. "Don't you know that the Kingdom of God is at hand, that Messiah is nearly come? Don't live in your sins any longer! Cleanse your hearts and your ways, and be baptized! Wash away your sins and receive forgiveness from your God!"

Jonathan had been one of those who had waded into the water in response to the Prophet's call. "Yes, Lord, cleanse my heart," he had prayed. "Make me ready for your Kingdom." And as Jonathan came up out of the water he had felt God's forgiveness and newness. At thirteen he had become a son of the Law. Now he was a son of the Kingdom, too.

As he had stood, water dripping from his long hair, something strange and wonderful had occurred. Suddenly the Prophet was silent, and just stood staring. Staring at something on the riverbank. As the Prophet continued to stare, soon every eye of every person followed his gaze. John the Baptist was looking at a man walking at the river's edge.



"Behold!" John the Baptist had said in awe. "Behold! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." And at that, the Prophet bowed his head slightly out of reverence, and as he did, so did the rest of the people.

The man had nodded almost imperceptibly to the Prophet in response, and then continued to walk along the bank. The crowds parted as he came to them and they let him through. Then he had passed on, out of sight, and it was over.

Soon the crowd was all a-buzz. "Who was that?" they asked one another.

"Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth," said one who knew him, and soon the word spread throughout the crowd. "It is Jesus. Jesus, the carpenter from Nazareth."

The next day it was the same. Preaching, baptizing for hours throughout the morning and then the Prophet stopped again, and again his gaze fell upon the man.

"Lamb of God," Jonathan could hear the Prophet say with hushed reverence. "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

That's it? That is Jonathan's connection to this man on the cross? Didn't he even hear Jesus teach or see him perform a miracle?

Actually, no. When Jesus came to Jericho a year or two later and converted that notorious tax collector Zacchaeus, Jonathan had been away in search of ungrazed fields for his flock.

So what kind of tenuous connection is this?

Not tenuous at all. Persistent, obsessive, perhaps — anything but tenuous — because the vivid image of Jesus' face and those very strange words, "Lamb of God," had burned indelibly into Jonathan's heart.

What does "Lamb of God" mean? he wondered. Next chance he got, he asked the rabbi.

"What is the Lamb of God, Rabbi?"

The old man gestured for him to sit down in the shade outside the Jericho synagogue that hot afternoon. Then the old rabbi eased his tired body onto a stool next to the doorway.



"You know, Jonathan," the white-bearded rabbi began, "that lambs are regularly sacrificed for the sins of the people."

"Then, too, your father takes his best lambs up to Jerusalem every spring for Passover. Centuries ago, boy," he said, "when God brought us out of the land of Egypt, Pharaoh didn't want to let our people go. You remember the ten plagues God brought on the Egyptians under Moses? The final plague was to be the death of the firstborn."

"So that first Passover which took place the night before the Great Exodus, a lamb was sacrificed for each family. Each father dipped a branch of hyssop into the blood of his family's sacrifice, and daubed it on the doorpost and lintel of his house."

As the rabbi continued to speak, Jonathan's mind could visualize the slaughtered lamb. And he could see the fresh blood of the lamb that had been painted onto the doorpost. He could see it drip down the post and dribble onto the ground.

"And at evening on that Day," the rabbi continued, "each father made very sure that each child — each son, each daughter — had been brought inside the house and accounted for. Because outside that night, the Lord struck the land of Egypt, slaying the firstborn son of every family in the entire kingdom. Every firstborn died, except for those sons of Israel whose fathers had sacrificed a lamb and painted its blood on their doorposts as a mark of faith."

"'When I see the blood,' God had promised, 'I will pass over you.' And He did pass over us," the rabbi concluded. "Not one firstborn Israelite met death that night when death was all around us. And by morning all Israel walked free, journeying out of the land of bondage into a new day of liberty."

So the "Lamb of God" is a Passover lamb, thought Jonathan, as he thanked the rabbi and returned to his father's flocks. A Passover lamb.

Jonathan's father had a contract to deliver eight dozen Passover lambs to the Temple in Jerusalem a few days before Passover. Jonathan, now sixteen, and his older brother Benjamin were given the responsibility of bringing these 96 lambs to Jerusalem.

As Jonathan's flock climbed the Jericho Road up to Jerusalem, he pondered these sheep and their wonderful and awful role in redemption. Two weeks from now, each would have been slaughtered, and its blood poured out. Had this been ancient Egypt, each lamb would have been sacrificed for a family so that the Lord might pass over them — the lamb's life given in exchange for the lives of the family.

Jonathan looked at the white, woolly backs of these yearling lambs as they bobbed up and down on the road to Jerusalem. What a burden for an innocent sheep, to die for a family. His father's lambs would suffice for ninety-six families, but what about the rest? Jonathan's dark eyes were fixed on the road ahead, but his mind was a thousand miles away. Only ninety-six families. Surely there are enough lambs for the others.

But there was no time for the lazy musings of the upward path now. They had reached the summit of the hill, and beyond them was the glorious panorama of the Holy City, the gold of the Temple gleaming in the noonday sun. What a thrill!

Now down to the Kidron brook that runs along the east side of the Temple. Then the flock struggled up the steep grade to the Sheep Gate where they were inspected by a priest. And as each was found to be without blemish, each was certified as an approved sacrifice. And each of those unblemished sheep would bring Jonathan's father a handsome price.

For the next few days Jonathan and his brother guarded the certified yearling lambs until the day of Passover. Then their task would be over and they would return to Jericho.



Jesus, too, was in Jerusalem, Jonathan had heard. Jonathan hoped to get to see him before going home. But the sheep kept him busy and soon his few days in the Holy City were nearly over.

Then in rapid succession, Jonathan heard bits of the shocking news that flashed throughout the city. Jesus had been arrested! Now he was being tried. Now condemned to death. How could this be? How could it?

Jonathan's duties were over now and he was free to roam the pilgrim-packed city. But there was little joy in the city this year. Tension, yes, and hatred. There was fear and anger, too, as the Romans carried out their grizzly task of crucifying the popular hero Jesus.

Many others had heard the news by now, and Jonathan joined the crowd that surged along the road that led to the killing ground outside the city to see if it were really true. There Jonathan finally saw him on the center cross, dying. Jesus! He looked like Jonathan remembered him, yet drained, crushed, as it were, by the weight of the world. A crown of thorns had been pressed into his scalp, and his hands and feet had been spiked to the huge cross that stood naked against the foreboding darkness.

Jonathan pushed closer. Part of him wanted to run and hide. But part of him had to see, had to see for himself. Jonathan edged his way through the press of mourners until he came to the perimeter set up by the soldiers.

Jonathan stood transfixed, tears running down his cheeks. And then he heard Jesus declare in a weak voice, yet clearly, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

"What are they doing?" Jonathan wanted to shout. "What are they doing to this holy and righteous man?"

Jonathan's eyes followed another droplet of blood as it lingered for a moment on the wooden crossbeam, and then fell onto the rocks below the cross.

Perhaps of all the onlookers that day, Jonathan alone remembered and began to understand.

"Behold," Jonathan said out loud, but quietly so that no one could hear unless listening intently. "Behold," said Jonathan, weeping silently, now dropping to his knees.

"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."