



This Sunday is **Palm Sunday**, when we stand on the threshold of another Holy Week. For all Christians, and for Catholics in a particular way, it is the most important week in the year.

Please don't stay away from the community gatherings this week unless of course it is really difficult or impossible for you to be with us; be with us then in spirit and we shall remember you.

If you are free, please come to the **Office of Readings and Morning Prayer** to begin **Holy Thursday** at 10am in the Cathedral. The Morning Prayers over the three days centre on the singing and recitation of the Psalms which Jesus himself and his contemporaries would have prayed, especially at Passover time. The principal Liturgies of the Easter Triduum, the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Good Friday Liturgy of the Passion and the great Easter Vigil will be celebrated in all of our three churches: the schedule is on the opposite page.

Especially, please do your best to come to the **Mass of the Lord's Supper** on **Thursday evening** and experience it as brothers and sisters in a parish family, and invite your family and friends to be with us as well. This beautiful opening of the Triduum takes us back to the Upper Room of the Lord's Supper and recalls the institution of the Eucharist and the fact that we are a Eucharistic people. This Lent has been an intense experience of God's forgiving and inclusive love, as we have read the Gospels of Luke & John. Holy Thursday is the night of communion and reconciliation, and all God's people, young and old, gather to open the three days of the Easter Triduum and to keep the Easter feast in its entirety.

On **Good Friday** our principal gathering is the **Liturgy of the Lord's Passion**. [But do come to the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer at 10am in the Cathedral to begin the day if you can.] It is on this day, when we have heard the Glorious Passion of John the Evangelist, and prayed for the whole world in the intercessions that we come forward (barefoot even?) to venerate the cross and venerate our Saviour in his glorious passion.

**Holy Saturday** is *a day of waiting at the Lord's tomb*. If at all possible, please try to come to the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer to begin the day – again, 10am in the Cathedral. **Holy Saturday** of course leads us to the key gathering of the Church in the whole year, that of the **Easter Vigil** — which begins in darkness round the paschal fire. Here is announced the first cry of Christ's resurrection, *Lumen Christi – Deo Gratias*. Then we follow light of the Easter Candle and praise God for his gift of light. Following that, we are seated and we listen to our story proclaimed in the readings of our salvation, from the Old Testament principally, and finally the Easter Gospel is proclaimed. Only after all that do we renew our Baptismal Promises, sign ourselves with blessed Easter water and celebrate the Easter Eucharist.

Each part of our story on this night, from Creation to Abraham and Isaac, to the great Exodus, speaks to us of our own sacrifices in faith, our own Exodus. We hear prophets calling us back to a right relationship with our God. The readings provoke and stimulate us: *'Do you know that when you were baptised into Christ Jesus, you were baptised into his death?'* This is the time for us to take our stand, alive, risen with new life.

The font is the water of creation, the water of the Red Sea, the water of the Jordan, the water of our baptism. **The Easter Vigil** reaches its climax with the celebration of the Eucharist, the crowning of God's work in us, where he seats us at his table, and feeds us on the Body and Blood of Jesus; there is nothing more He can give. The night is now far on. We have given our time to God; in truth all we have given is a little of what he gives to us in the days and years of our lives. In that time He gives us our identity and our future and we gather on this night to receive these gifts from his hands.

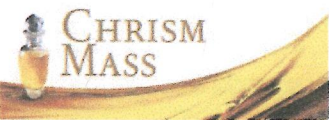
**Easter offering envelopes** for St Mary's, Forebank are available at the back of the Church today.

Thank you for your generosity in last Sunday's collections of £887 in the Cathedral, £529 in St Mary's Forebank, £361 in St Patrick's and £907 in Our Lady of Good Counsel. Grateful thanks to those who participated in the Cathedral Easter Raffle which raised £250.

**Our prayers for the sick:** Claire Cullen, Kimberley Black, Arthur Mulligan, Baby Lyn de Guzman, George Forbes, Margaret Malcolm, Catherine Nolan, Jim McArtney, Pamela Griffiths, Sharmalie Nandadasa, Steve Hackney, Jenny Wilson, Russell Walker, Ray Ritchie, Dr Frank Zwolinski, Tommie Feeney, Anneke Anderson, Cole Farningham, John Charkow, Heather Moffit, Susan McKay, Ray Conchie, Marie Manunga, Karen Dammer, Jackey Forrest-Moore, Catherine Gallacher, Marian Jackson;

**for those who have died recently:** Gina Manarin, Elinor Crighton, Margaret Quinn, Cora Pauline Dillon, Eddie Campbell, Catherine Newman; Karen Gomez, Con and Phil Barrett, Mrs Rubbani;

**those whose anniversaries occur at this time:** Edward Noble, Brig Moore, Emily Menzies, James Menzies, Ronald Johnston, Father John O'Farrell, Andrew McDevitt, Paul Moran; Canon McKearney, Pat Moran, Mrs Lettuce, Brother Cormac, Winifred Sreenan, Angela Franchi, Peter Crawford, Mary Crawford, Arthur Walker, John Macpherson, Catherine Barnett, Michael Branney, Anthony Duffy, Ernest Duffy, Tommy Reilly, Jean McReady, Elizabeth Stirling Jack Stirling.



I hope you will be able to join us for the **Annual Diocesan Mass of Chrism** when the holy oils are blessed for the year ahead, which takes place this coming **Wednesday 1 April** at 7pm in the Cathedral.

*All are welcome*