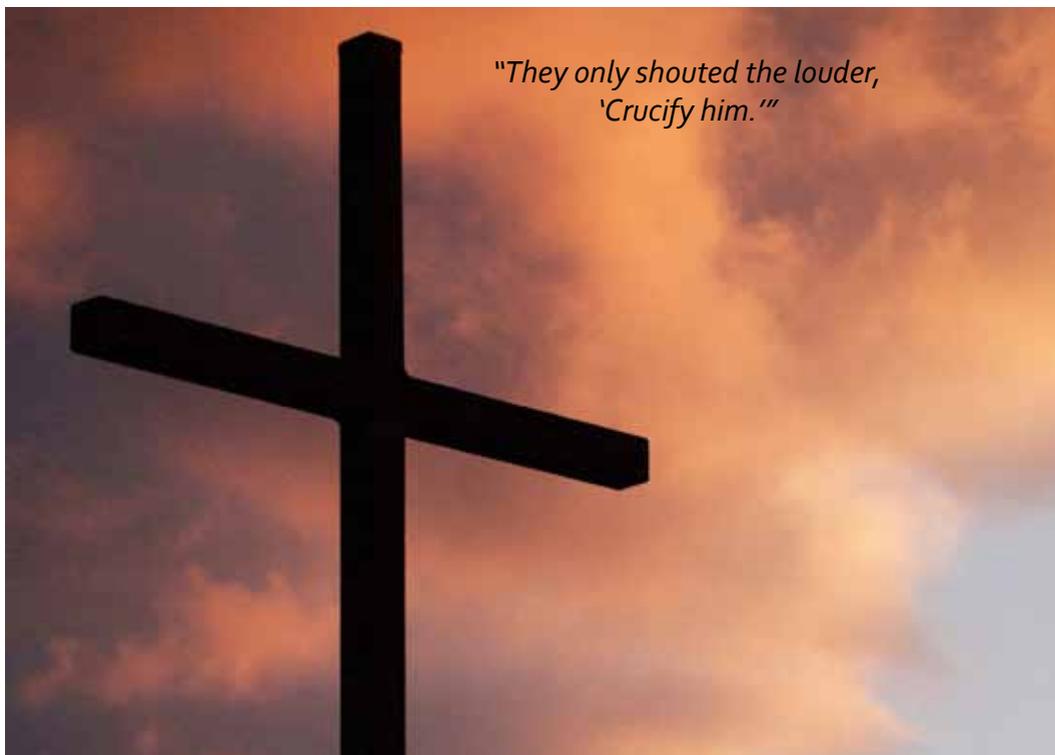


PALM SUNDAY 2018



FROM THE READINGS

Isaiah 50:4-7

For the Lord has given me a disciple's tongue. So that I may know how to reply to the wearied he provides me with speech. Each morning he wakes me to hear, to listen like a disciple. The Lord has opened my ear.

Philippians 2:6-11

His state was divine, yet Christ Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as men are, and

being as all men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross. But God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names.

Mark 15:1-39

They shouted again, "Crucify him." Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" They only shouted the louder, "Crucify him." So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified ...

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

REFLECTIONS

Crucified One,

may all who hang upon a cross
of suffering and sorrow,
or stand beneath a cross today,
find comfort and consolation
in your abiding presence.

Ease their pain and suffering.
Free them from discouragement.
Gentle their harsh emotions.
Cease their restlessness.
Coax them away from despair.

Mary, teach us how to be people of faith. Amen.

Adapted from 'The Fifth Sorrow', Joyce Rupp, Out of the Ordinary, 116

The story makes me think of the man known as the "good thief." For him to be on a cross, next to Christ – no doubt he had done some pretty terrible things in the course of his life. His mate, the one known as the "bad thief," kept hurling his taunts at Jesus ... but the good thief had the honesty and humility to say, "You and I deserve to be here. But he doesn't. He's different from us, he's good ... Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom." These few words were enough. The Lord didn't say, "Thank you for the kind thought. In a few years' time when you've atoned for your life, which hasn't been by any means exemplary, I'll admit you." No, he said, "This very day you will be with me. This very day." Isn't that fantastic! One second of good-will, of perfection, of grace received and lived, can be worth a whole lifetime."

Dom Helder Camara in Essential Writings, 156

FROM POPE FRANCIS

Jesus himself chose to identify with these our brothers and sisters enduring pain and anguish by agreeing to tread the 'way of sorrows' that led to Calvary. By dying on the cross, he surrendered himself into the hands of the Father, taking upon himself and in himself, with self-sacrificing love, the physical, moral and spiritual wounds of humanity ... Jesus embraced the nakedness, the hunger and thirst, the loneliness, pain and death of men and women of all times ...

Pope Francis in Dear Young Friends, 18

Where does fear leave us? The feeling of being closed in on oneself, trapped. Once we feel that way, our fear starts to fester and is inevitably joined by its 'twin sister', paralysis: the feeling of being paralysed. Thinking that in this world, in our cities and our communities, there is no longer any room to grow, to dream, to create, to gaze at new horizons – in a word, to live ...

Pope Francis in Dear Young Friends, 24

People may laugh at you because you believe in the gentle and unassuming power of mercy. But do not be afraid.

Pope Francis in Dear Young Friends, 35

FOR THINKING AND TALKING

Imagine: You are Simon of Cyrene or another person in the story of Jesus' final hours leading to crucifixion. What do you experience? What are your thoughts and feelings?

Translate to life: What are the crosses in your life? Who helps you to carry them? Is there someone for you to turn to? What does Jesus want to say to you? What does he want to do for you?

Express the heart: Find words or an image for

- Insights gained from these readings and reflections
- A hope or intention for the future.

ONE HOUR FOR A GROUP

- **Begin with a short prayer**, asking God's presence and guidance.
- **Time with the Text:** Allow quiet time for reading and reflecting. ~15 mins
- **Discussion:**
 1. Each person shares a key insight from their reading and reflection. 10 mins
 2. General Discussion. 30 mins
- **Concluding Prayer Together**
eg. 'Prayer' from this leaflet, a traditional prayer, or your own words.

PRAYER

Jesus,
grant us strength to carry our cross.

on those days when life seems too demanding

with all the cares, burdens, and concerns

when we experience great loneliness deep inside

and the pain of separation fills our spirits ...

when we struggle with decision making

and the time comes to make good choices about our lives ...

when we are with others in their physical pain

or when we vigil with one who has a terminal illness ...

when we are asked to go the extra mile,

to be generous with our time and our presence ...

when we are weary and worn out,

when it seems like all of our energy has been drained away ...

when we are challenged to risk our security

and to accept new growth in our relationship with you ...

when we experience the efforts of ageing

or extended illness on our bodies or our minds ...

when we feel discouraged,

desolate, and depressed and want to withdraw from others

when worries and concerns choke our peacefulness

and leave us with anxiety and fear

when we harbour old wounds

and are called to offer or to receive forgiveness ...

Crucified Jesus,

help us to take up our cross day by day.

Through these crosses we can grow closer to you.

Help us to lean on you and to learn from you.

May we not give in to self-pity or self-doubt.

Let us trust in your presence which strengthens us.

Encourage us on our tomb-like days.

Remind us of your resurrection.

Help us to keep our focus on life and growth. **Amen.**

Adapted from Joyce Rupp, Out of the Ordinary, 100



Prepared by: Adult Faith Education Sandhurst PO Box 201 Bendigo Vic 3552. E: adultfaith@sandhurst.catholic.org.au **Acknowledgements:** Joyce Rupp, *Out of the Ordinary*, Notre Dame Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 2010. Francis McDonagh, *Dom Helder Camara: Essential Writings*, Marynoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009; Bishop Brendan Leahy (Ed), *Dear Young Friends: Pope Francis in Conversation With Young People* Mulgrave, Victoria: Garratt Publishing, 2017.