

Family Prayer

Good Friday- March 29 2024

by Kirby Will, Consultant Formation: Identity and Outreach



We acknowledge the First Nations peoples of this land, the Traditional Custodians who celebrated the wisdom, insight, and knowledge of their ancestors. We recognise their indelible connection to the land, seas, skies, and waterways now known as Australia. We show respect to the Elders who shared the memories, traditions, and stories of the First People, and endured losses too. May we hold their grief with loving compassion, and journey together towards a hope-filled, healing future.

Context

Good Friday: The Passion of the Lord

Good Friday is the most solemn day in the life of the Christian Church. No mass is celebrated in Catholic Churches – all altars are bare, and tabernacles emptied and open; things that point to the Church being in mourning. In some Catholic parishes, the day is marked by a ritual of story known as Stations of the Cross prior to a ceremonial liturgy called the Passion of the Lord. Traditionally, the Passion of the Lord's service takes place at 3pm - the time often associated with the death of Jesus – the culmination of our Lord's Passion.



Eighth Station, The Way of the Cross by Suzanne Orchison (14 March 2023) and displayed in St Peter and Paul's Old Cathedral, Goulbourn NSW.

Scripture

‡ Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

He learned obedience and became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Since in Jesus, the Son of God, we have the supreme high priest who has gone through to the highest heaven, we must never let go of the faith that we have professed. For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin. Let us be confident, then, in approaching the throne of grace, that we shall have mercy from him and find grace, when we are in need of help. During his life on earth, he offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was a Son, he learnt to obey through suffering, but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation.

The word of the Lord

Reflection by Kirby Will

Project Officer Identity and Outreach

In Catholic Churches, the Gospel Scriptures on the Passion of Jesus are often the focal point for Good Friday. However, the above passage from St Paul's Letters to the Hebrews has important reminders for followers of Jesus to bear in mind when reflecting on the events of Good Friday and their implications.

Firstly, early in the passage, the author implores the community not to let go of their faith, despite what has happened to Jesus. Even Jesus' own disciples struggled with this as their support for him waned after his arrest. It is something that believers can tend to struggle with in our current society too where there are many challenges to people of faith. Unlike the apostles, though, Christians can see the hope from the outcome of Jesus' death and use this to maintain faith in light of the Resurrection.

The author of this Scripture also reminds that Jesus has a unique, shared perspective with all humankind. In his humanity, Jesus experienced temptations just as people do, and this understanding invites mercy when believers approach Jesus and God with their personal challenges.

The solemnness of Good Friday can feel like there is an insurmountable challenge to face: if Jesus – who in the Christian tradition was without sin - can face such turmoil, what hope is there for us? As Catholics reflect on the last moments of Jesus' life, they too are called to focus on the mercy of God and the ways in which it has and can enrich their lives. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews reminds listeners to be confident in asking for mercy and remember that Jesus' experiences inform this mercy. There is no need to shy away from asking for mercy; instead, there is an invitation seek this, and look forward to a life lived with hope in the mercy, love, and salvation of God.

Prayer

This prayer is from **A Resurrected Life – Evangelisation Brisbane's Daily Reflections for Lent 2024**.

Christ Jesus,
On this most holy day, I keep my eyes on you on your cross and on your great loving sacrifice.
I marvel at the love you have for me and the pain you suffered.
Give me the strength to bear my sufferings with courage, trusting your Passion heals me.
Amen.

Call to Action

- pray the Stations of the Cross with this [resource](#) designed for children.
- read this [reflection](#) on Hot Cross Buns before you eat some. You might like to bake some using this [recipe](#).
- reflect on the Stations of the Cross and the Crucifixion with this [page](#). The four additional boxes are to reflect on four elements other than the Crucifixion from the Passion story with words and/or images.



Photograph of artwork from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre Jerusalem displayed in the sacristy leading to the chapel by M. Gaul 7th July 2023.