**Newsletter for the week commencing 24th March 2024**

**PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD**

**Please follow the readings in the Special Palm Sunday Book for Palm Sunday and then the Triduum book for three-part service – Thursday, Friday and Saturday/Sunday**

**Father Behr writes:**

REFLECTION: FOURTH STATION OF THE CROSS – JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

In the closing prayer of his extraordinarily moving Litany of the Passion, St John Henry Newman sums up the sheer earthly hell that Jesus endured to open the gates of Heaven to fallen humanity. The prayer provides deep and sorrowful reflection and has inspired what follows.

The back-breaking cross is tearing excruciatingly into Jesus’ shoulder. He has been brutally whipped. Long stiff sharp thorns made into a braided crown have been slammed down into his scalp. He has been slapped. He has been spat upon, mocked, reviled. He has been buffeted and struck with rods and reckoned among thieves. They have viciously plucked out his beard. Now as he makes his way to Golgotha the crowds jeer at him, some spit at him. How many onlookers spat at Our Lord? Quite a few, I imagine.

Out of that crowd a kindly face appears, a face filled with anguish. It is his mother. It is Mary. She can see the violence already perpetrated against her son, and yet there is worse to come.

The dialogue between Jesus and Mary is likely to have been brief. But it may be that in the hereafter we will discover that it was one of the most mystical conversations in history. Where is the delivering hand of the Almighty in all this pain, despair, and humiliation?

We can only conjecture as to what mother and son, these infinitely holy people, said to each other. I think it likely that Jesus reminded his mother of Lazarus, the man he raised from the dead, giving intimation of his own Resurrection. He may have recalled with her the three days when he was a boy, when she thought he was lost, (and to all intents and purposes lost for ever, possibly kidnapped to be sold as a slave). When she and Joseph found him, he said, ‘Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my father’s house.’

For her part Mary was probably now mulling the fullness of the prophecy of Simeon (Luke, 2:25-35): ‘Your son is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul.’

Our Lady was full of supernatural grace. She may have recalled the words of her cousin Elizabeth’s son, John, when he said of Jesus, ‘Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’

Mary is being ostracised from the community. Her son is being considered a criminal and a blasphemer. Mary’s heart is broken but she trusts in the greatness and goodness of God, remembering when Jesus could not be found for three days.

Some of our Christian brothers and sisters from other denominations miss something when they question Catholicism’s emphasis on Our Lady. The fourth station of the cross provides you and me with the chance to reflect on Mary as supreme and trustworthy consoler for the sufferings of all, and indeed all parents. I think of the terrible heartache of those whose sons or daughters have been violently bullied, falsely accused, unjustly treated, tortured, or murdered. Mary experienced heartache from evils such as these – first hand.

Mary is sometimes referred to as the Queen of Peace. In our world so riven by injustice, lies and violence our Catholic faith invites us to turn to her and ask her intercessory prayers for our sufferings, for our children, our families, for those who suffer from intimidation, bullying and injustice. She was, after all, plunged into the depths of heartbreak in seeing Jesus her son, a man of such goodness, kindness, and wisdom, being treated so abysmally, so brutally, so unjustly. Let’s be open to her care for us. Let’s ask her to ask God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for all our needs and the needs of others.

We could use the prayer called ‘Beneath Thy Protection’, which is reckoned to be the earliest known invocation of Mary’s help (around AD 250):

 We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.

Fr Behr

**Your Prayers are asked for:**

**Those recently deceased:**

**Those ill or infirm:** PaulLane, Mara McDermot, June Munton, Ailish Cantwell (Jones), Sylwia Dorosz, Joe Adams, Ellie Lawrence, Patricia Hook, Josie Payne, Pat Holland and all those who are unwell and in need of our prayers.

**Those whose anniversaries of death occur at this time:**Gertrude Julia Barclay (Foundress of St Andrew’s), George Hyland, Peter Webbe-Wood, Elizabeth Trevor, Ann Clark, Sheila Newington, Don Woodman, Terry Campbell and Gladys Bennett.

|  |
| --- |
| **This week’s services (Holy Week), Feasts and Mass intentions during the week.** |
| **Saturday 23rd March****Feria** | No public Mass am10.30 -11am Confession6pm Vigil Mass*People of the Parish***Readers: Pat and Peter** |
| **Sunday 24th March****Palm Sunday (B)** | 10am Mass *Alex Hatch RIP***Reader: Kathy**12 Midday Traditional Latin Mass  |
| **Monday 25th March**Holy Week | 9.30 Morning Prayer, followed by…10am Mass *Maureen Saunders Intentions,*followed by Stations of the Cross |
| **Tuesday 26th March**Holy Week | 10am Mass *In Reparation.* followed by refreshments and a film  *Donor’s  Intention* |
| **Wednesday 27th March**Holy Week | 10am Service of the Word and Holy Communion and Stations of the Cross |
| **Thursday 28th March****Maundy Thursday** | 9am-10am Adoration10am Mass *For Priests*7.30pm Mass of the Lord’s Supper and Washing of Feet                                                                               **Readers:  James** |
| **Friday 29th March****Friday of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday)** | **3pm The Passion of the Lord.   Readers: James,  Liz and Rachel** |
| **Saturday 30th March****Holy Saturday****The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night** | 10am Morning Prayer followed by the opportunity for Confession.8pm Easter Vigil Mass*People of the Parish***Readers: Wendy and Pat.** |
| **Sunday 31st March****Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord** | 8.30am Mass   *Private Intention*                                                               10am Easter Sunday Mass  *Timothy Oxley RIP***Reader: Suzanne**12 Midday Easter Sunday Traditional Latin Mass  |
| **Flowers: For Maundy Thursday (Altar of Repose) – Kathy / for Easter Sunday – Everyone!** |

**Confession**

Fr Behr is available for Confession every Saturday from 10.30am - 11am. He is also happy to visit those who are not able to come to church.

**Children’s Liturgy.**   Children’s Liturgy at the 10am Mass on the first Sunday of every month. All children who have not made their First Holy Communion are welcome to attend.  The next lesson with Lorraine 7th April.

**Feet: We urgently need feet for the Washing of Feet on Maundy Thursday!  Please let Fr Behr or Deacon Jolyon know if you can help.  We will also need three people to bring up the oils.  Again, let Fr. Behr or Deacon Jolyon know.**

**Flowers for Easter:**

There will be a retiring collection this weekend for flowers to make our church look beautiful for Easter.

If anyone would like to do a vase of flowers or an arrangement for a window ledge for Easter the Flower Group would be delighted.  Easter colours: yellow, white, lilac/pale purple, a little pale pink and blue.  Please let Frances if you can - 01233 732657 or after Mass on Sunday.

**Second Collection.** The figure for the second collection for poor parishes was £182.67.

**Easter Offering:** **Your Easter offering is your personal gift to your parish priest.**

**Parish Social for Saint George’s Day - Saturday 20th April – 7.00 pm onwards.**

As we enter the season of Spring, leaving Winter far behind, why not come and join your fellow parishioners for a social evening in the parish hall to celebrate St George's day (23rd April), patron saint of England and of our Diocese.  The social will commence after the 6pm mass with food, drink and music being provided.

To help offset the cost of the food and drink it would be very much appreciated if you can donate £5 which will be collected on the evening. In addition, if you are also able to donate wine and/or beer this will also be very much appreciated.  A sheet will be available in the church porch to put your names on so we have an idea of numbers attending.**Looking forward to seeing you.**

**Beginning Experience Weekend.**

Beginning Experience is a special residential weekend programme for widowed, separated and divorced people, which helps participants with natural feelings of grief and loss.  This next programme will be held on 12-14 April; contact: Mary: 0208 647 4760, or Maura: 07795 498445, email besouthofengland@gmail.com.

**Preparation for Divine Mercy Sunday Retreat.**

 The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London is holding a Preparation for Divine Mercy Sunday Retreat at Aylesford Priory, Aylesford, Kent on Saturday 6th April 2024 from 10.00 am to 4:30 pm. The retreat will include teachings on the Message of Divine Mercy, Holy Mass, Hour of Mercy with Stations of the Cross, Adoration and Benediction and Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus. All welcome. Call Millie on 07957594646 for more information.

**Holy Week Services:**

**During Holy Week, we have the opportunity to grow in gratitude for the great gift of Our Lord’s Passion and Death.**

* **Monday:              Morning Prayer 9.30am with Mass 10am followed by Stations of the Cross.**
* **Tuesday:   Mass 10.00 am followed by coffee morning and film.**
* **Wednesday:        Word and Communion at 10.00 am followed by Stations of the Cross.**
* **Thursday:             Mass of the Lord’s Supper at 7.30 pm followed by watching till 10.00 pm with Night Prayer.**
* **Good Friday:       Witness Service at Town Hall 10.00 am, Confession from 2.00 pm -2.30 pm, Passion at 3.00 pm.**
* **Holy Saturday:   Morning Prayer 10.00 am followed by opportunity for Confession, Easter Vigil 8.00 pm.**
* **Easter Sunday:  Mass 8.30 am and 10.00 am, Latin Mass 12.00 pm. (Please note extra Mass on Easter Sunday at 8.30 am, is only for Easter Sunday).**