



*PASSION
(PALM)
SUNDAY
5 APRIL 2020*



Passion readings for Holy Week: (Sunday) Matthew 26,14—27,66 (Friday) John 18,1-19,42: a few points of comparison. 1. (Gethsemane) Jesus in Mt and Jn: Mt shows Jesus' weakness: "if poss. let this cup pass me by". For Jn a majestic Jesus is in control. He knows "everything that was going to happen to him and came forward"; the Temple Guards move back and fall to the ground. Mt: "all the disciples deserted him and ran away"; Jn: "If I am the one you are looking for, let these others go". 2. (Before the religious authorities): Mt: trial of Jesus inside Palace and of Peter outside. Jn: a disciple known to the high priest (i.e. the "beloved disciple") brings Peter in. 3. (on the Cross) in Mt, some faithful women watch from a distance but Jesus has no support nearby. He is taunted and cries out to God in anguish. In Jn, his loving mother, her companions and the beloved disciple stand "near the Cross" and Jesus entrusts one to the other. Jesus' final words are not a cry of anguish, as in Mt, but express the fulfilment of his obedience to the Father's will: "It is accomplished".

HOLY WEEK ARRANGEMENTS: Following the Bishops' official guidance our own arrangements will be:

PALM SUNDAY: Mass behind closed doors in St Wulstan's at 10.30; no distribution of palms but I will bless them, to be distributed when we are eventually reunited in St Wulstan's. I suggest you follow from elsewhere via live streaming and, especially, read and meditate on St Matthew's account of the Passion

HOLY THURSDAY: No washing of feet and no Altar of Repose or procession, except in St Chad's Cathedral, where there will be watching (www.stchadscathedral.org.uk.) I shall offer Mass in the house at 6pm. "Priests are to make their Renewal of Priestly Commitment before the tabernacle".

GOOD FRIDAY: No liturgy in St Wulstan's. "The priest must spend time in prayer before a crucifix for his people and pray the Universal Prayers of the Liturgy, including a special one for the pandemic"(see below). Again, it would be good for us to read and meditate on St John's Passion

Special solemn intercession for Good Friday: "Let us pray also for all those who suffer the consequences of the current pandemic, that God the Father may grant health to the sick, strength to those who care for them, comfort to families and salvation to all the victims who have died." Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says: "Almighty, ever-living God, only support of our human weakness, look with compassion upon the sorrowful condition of your children who suffer because of this pandemic; relieve the pain of the sick, give strength to those who care for them, welcome into your peace those who have died and, throughout this time of tribulation, grant that we may all find comfort in your merciful love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. "

EASTER VIGIL Again, no liturgy in St Wulstan's. (I shall pray the Office of Readings instead, and perhaps sing the *Exultet* alone in Latin!). The Paschal Candle will, however, be placed on the sanctuary in our church and the gold frontal will, I hope, also be in position.

EASTER DAY: Mass behind closed doors at 10.30. We should aim to renew our baptismal promises (whether during live streamed Masses or not, in our own words if necessary) either on Saturday night or Sunday.

PLEASE PRAY for Christopher Kouwen, Mary Plunkett, Paul Hothersall and Les Miller, who have died, for John Bilsborough, Pat Higgins, Rosemarie Kay, Andy McGowan, Pauline Mills, Peter Onions, Nicholas Ratcliff, Raymond Turner and Ellen Verdult who are unwell/housebound.