

Palm Sunday

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Dear Parishioners,

This weekend we begin the solemn week of Holy Week with the celebration of Palm Sunday. In the Palm Sunday celebration, there is a stark contrast between the readings. The triumphal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem while sitting on a colt with a *“very large crowd spreading their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and strewed them on the road. The crowds preceding him and those following kept crying out and saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.’”* (Mt 21:8-9) In the proclamation of the Passion, we hear the people reviling and mocking Jesus and *“from noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. ... Jesus cried out again in a loud voice and gave up his spirit.”* (Mt 27:45-50)

There is also a stark contrast between how we were living, celebrating, and relating with each other at the start of Lent and how we experience daily life today as we honor our responsibility to help stop this virus. With this unprecedented pandemic, we are called to remember that Jesus’ death did not end with tragedy, but we recall the hope that brought forth by the celebration of His resurrection. A hope of newness of life and the promise of our heavenly inheritance. Let us reaffirm our commitment to praying for the end of this pandemic, for those affected by the virus, for those on the front lines, and for all humanity as we work together to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Today, I received the formal decree from the Catholic Conference of Ohio regarding the suspension of public masses. It reads: “To that end, the Catholic Bishops of Ohio extend the temporary suspension of all publicly celebrated Masses/liturgies at least through and including Sunday May 3rd. The Bishops of Ohio dispense the Catholic faithful who reside in their respective dioceses and all other Catholics currently in Ohio from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass during this time period.” The full decree is posted on the website. Let’s continue to put our hope in the resurrected Lord that this will come to a conclusion soon.

This past weekend I provided you with an opportunity to join me in prayer. We must remember that prayer is a timeless encounter with our Lord and with one another. It is an opportunity to connect with our local faith community. This Holy Week we will also provide similar opportunities to pray with me and each other.

communion. In addition, the website and Facebook will offer other opportunities for prayer, such as the Stations of the Cross, Divine Mercy Chaplet, and the Holy Rosary. I am truly grateful for those that have help me put these together. I also encourage you to connect with the universal church by praying with Pope Francis during these sacred days through some form of media.

Blessed Palms will be made available this weekend. Following the Diocesan directives, tables with palms will be placed outside the church. There will be three tables at each location. At Saint James, two tables will be in front of the church and one in the courtyard by the statue of Mary. At Saint Clement, tables will be located by the flagpole, the front door, and in front of the chapel door. They will be available on Saturday from 4pm - 6pm and Sunday from 9am - 12pm. I will also save palms to be distributed later. **PLEASE** use your best judgment, good hygiene, proper social distancing and common sense. Remember, palms are only a reminder for us; they have nothing to do with our salvation.

On Wednesday I celebrated mass at the Poor Clare Monastery, where I'm the only one in the chapel. While I can hear the sisters, they are in another room watching via Skype. When I was leaving the monastery, I noticed the Divine Mercy image on their door. This has been a growing spiritual practice, and I invite you to visit <https://www.thedivinermercy.org/articles/seal-doorposts> to learn more about this spiritual weapon that we can employ together. This excellent example of universal solidarity reminds us of Jesus' mercy and protection. (<https://www.thedivinermercy.org/divinermercyimage>)

As you know, the parish staff is working from home and rarely in the office. Fr. Deogratias peeks his head out his suite door often to make sure I'm alive. I've tried enlisting his help to clean the rectory windows (there are plenty to share), but to no avail... so much for brotherly support! I am very grateful for the support that so many of you have given to Father and me. The notes, phone messages, and care packages have been a great surprise. The financial support of the parish during this time has been steady - thank you for your generous hearts. Those of you who donate online or are planning to start, we are in the process of adding credit card donations as a new option. And thank you to everyone who sent their support via mail or the parish drop box.

Please visit the parish website and Facebook pages to stay up-to-date about upcoming Holy Week liturgies. Stay in touch with family members, neighbors, coworkers, classmates, and maybe even reach out to that person that you haven't seen or spoken with for some time. Especially, remember the most vulnerable and send them your love. Love is medicine.

Peace of Christ,

Fr. Joseph G. Workman
Pastor

Diocese Information and Guidance

[Link to Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, Live streamed Mass and COVID-19 updates](#)

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