

SUNDAY REFLECTIONS - PALM SUNDAY YEAR B - 25 MARCH 2018



THE HOLY WEEK STORY is a story of a struggle for communion and solidarity in the midst of great challenges and even injustice and suffering:

- in the Passover Meal that Jesus celebrates
- in the model of service that we see in the washing of feet on Thursday
- in all the courageous actions of Jesus in the midst of opposition
- in the betrayal of Jesus by his closest companions
- in the suffering and death of Jesus on Friday
- in the victory of resurrection and liberation that is revealed on Easter.

The struggle for communion and solidarity continues today. We are called to connect Jesus' experience of suffering and struggle to our own experience today – an experience that includes life and death, injustice and courage, community and isolation, violence and peace.

CHRISTINE WADE, Moderator, Lay Carmelite Council, reflects on a deep experience which reminded her of the enduring relevance of the Story of The Passion, here and now:

Some years ago, I visited the Pro Hart Gallery in Broken Hill. Tucked up in the upper reaches of the gallery, I came across a painting which was quite different to the others. On a sunset coloured wash, it depicted Christ weighed down with carrying his cross. Behind him straggled a ragtag bunch of humanity – the elderly, a child with only one leg on crutches, a man with a machine gun and many, many others. This painting stopped me in my tracks! It almost looked like a pen and ink sketch but for me the impact was enormous. Sure, it depicted Christ carrying the cross but the amazing element for me was that it presented the polyglot of people caught up in the Easter story and brought home to me the enduring relevance of **The Passion here and now, for all of us.**

If we were to create a similar picture, which figures would it contain? Perhaps it would include the people of Syria, the Rohingya refugees, the refugees flooding into Europe, the elderly without support systems, people living in abusive relationships, people whose sexuality does not fit 'the norm', kids who are sick and hungry, workers for the common good

with very limited resources, the down – and – out beggars on city streets, people who do not receive a fair wage for their work, people who cannot find work, people in 'Detention Centres', people under repressive regimes – be it in their country, their workplace or their home. The list seems endless.

What about the ordinary people in Jesus' time? At least some of them were expecting a triumphal Messiah who would overthrow oppression with arms and flaring battles. Not what they got. Instead they had a rabbi who emptied himself of everything.

What about the ordinary people in western civilisation in our own time? Are we misguided in our expectations too? Are we selling out to the lie that more and more is better as we live under the yoke of corporate greed, which causes jobs to disappear and dreams to disintegrate? **Are we any different** to the Jewish people of Jesus' time who waved palms



and yelled out "Hosanna"? **Are we any different** to the crowd that screamed 'Crucify him!' Instead of a superhero, we have a man who looks at the ragtag of humanity and still says to us 'This is my body.'

The Easter story is worth remembering, re-telling, re-imaging, because it is the story of all of us in one way or another. The enduring relevance of the story will be put to us once again. *Happy Easter! ... Christine Wade.*

To enter into the mystery demands that we not be afraid of reality: that we not be locked into ourselves, that we not flee from what we fail to understand, that we not close our eyes to problems or deny them, that we not dismiss our questions.— *Pope Francis, 4 April 2015*



Intercessions

- With Jesus who was led out of the city, we pray for all who feel themselves marginalised in the Church, we pray: **Crucified God, hear our prayers.**
- With Jesus we remember people all over the world who have been affected by damaging and extreme weather events; their lives uprooted, the lives of people lost, animals killed and environment destroyed, we pray: **Crucified God, hear our prayers.**
- With Jesus who shares the suffering of crucified peoples, we remember the people of Syria who are suffering from the prolonged ravages of bombardment and war, we pray: **Crucified God, hear our prayer.**
- With Jesus who was arrested like a criminal, and falsely accused, we pray for all who are in prison and in offshore detention centres, particularly on Nauru and Manus Island, we pray: **Crucified God, hear our prayers.**
- With Jesus who was anointed and comforted in his distress by an unknown woman, strengthen and encourage all who follow in his steps by showing their compassion and care for others, we pray: **Crucified God, hear our prayers.**

Christ crucified and risen, the Wisdom of God manifests the truth, that divine justice and renewing power leavens the world in a way different from the techniques of dominating violence. The victory of shalom is won not by the sword of the warrior god, but by the awesome power of compassionate love, in and through solidarity with those who suffer. –

Elizabeth Johnson CSJ, She Who Is, 159

**Holy One,
Your grace abounds in our lives
as you make new covenants with us
and create new spirits and new hearts for us.
We are grateful for the faithful ways
that you walk with us daily
in our sufferings, fears, vulnerabilities
and as we take up our crosses.
Continue your work of grace in us,
for your grace is greater than any of our human deaths.
In your holy names we pray, Amen**

FROM the CARMELITE TRADITION ...

St John of the Cross

- ✚ Whenever anything disagreeable or displeasing happens to you, remember Christ crucified and be silent.
- ✚ The road is narrow. He who wishes to travel it more easily must cast off all things and use the cross as his cane. In other words, he must be truly resolved to suffer willingly for the love of God in all things.