Our holy week

Palm Sunday 2018

My brothers and sisters, we have listened to St Mark’s account of the passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have heard this story many times. We are very familiar with it. Yet every time we listen to it, surely we find ourselves being affected in some way or another. It touches us. It moves us. It stirs our souls. We cannot pass on from this reading without in some way being moved by what we have heard.

So just reflecting on our listening to the account of the passion and death of the Lord today, was there some part of the story that particularly seized our attention this year? As we listen to the account of the passion, did we find that our thoughts running down certain paths? Did we experience something that touched our spirit?

Take a moment to consider for a moment how listening to the Gospel today has moved us and spoken to our hearts.

Because the Gospel today takes us to the heart of the reason why Christ came among us. We heard that reflected in the Second Reading today. You heard in last Sunday’s Gospel the Lord declaring that the hour had come, and said then said that it was necessary for a wheat grain to fall on the ground and die. In these words, the Lord reveals that he understood that his death had very particular meaning and purpose. It is not just some tragic end to his life, but he knew that this was a fate ordained for him. He knew that this is what his Father was asking of him. And so he understands that his death was necessary. Not for himself, but for humanity. For each of us. Because he knows that his death will affect the reconciliation between sinful humanity and the all-holy God. And that his death will be the opening up of a path of salvation for all who believe in him and cling to his death as a means by which they will be saved from death.

The Lord’s death on Calvary was in fact the very meaning of his life.

Today we have a chance of going to Calvary and gazing upon our crucified Lord. And to set our hearts on pondering this profound mystery, and being draw into its meaning, the meaning of his death and resurrection for us. Today, and during this coming week, particularly on Good Friday, we will continue to contemplate these profound and wondrous mysteries. Because we are now entering our Holy Wek.

We will gather on Holy Thursday to commemorate the Last Supper and especially the gift of the Eucharist.

We will come together on Good Friday for the Stations of the Cross and then the Solemn Commemoration of the Lord’s Passion. And we will be invited to come forward to venerate the Cross.

We will meet together on Holy Saturday night in darkness to proclaim the risen Christ as the light of the world. We will sing our Easter proclamation and our hearts will rejoice in the joy of the Resurrection.

My brothers and sisters, this is our holy week, and we are invited by the Church to participate with faith and prayerful reflection upon the central mystery of our faith. We are now entering a most sacred time.

Archbishop Julian Porteous

Sunday 25 March 2018