

## King? Really?

There are two main sections in “Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion.” Palms and Passion.

But these make a jarring contrast to each other, and most of us never notice it! Time to get things straight.

The First Main Section consists of the blessing of palms and the procession with them into church. An extra Gospel is read.

In it, Jesus enters the city Jerusalem as a king would. He rides on a colt—an animal used for the entrance of royalty into a city.\* His disciples spread their cloaks over the colt's back as they would for a sovereign. Crowds along the way smooth their robes onto the roadway and strew out palm branches, cut from the fields. Symbolically, these are to soften the pathway. They cry out, “blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,” even as we do in the Sanctus at every Mass. This is surely a king come among us.

At Mass a ritual procession of palms commemorates this entrance. The priest and ministers make their way to the altar.

Then begins the Second Section, the Mass itself. For its Gospel we hear the Passion Reading from Mark. We stand in silence as the soldiers ridicule Jesus' so-called kingship, shouting in their rough voices, “here is the King of the Jews”!

They are not praising him. They are ridiculing this poor, ridiculous captive. They jam a mocking “kingly” crown on his head, and they say in effect what the condemned monarch in Shakespeare's Richard II said: “Farewell King!” They wrap a fake purple robe around his wounds—again, the color reserved for kings. They cackle like clowns and spit on him.

What a “kingdom of God” this had turned out to be. The two contrasting sections of Sunday's mass show the great irony to us.

Why would the King of Kings allow all this to happen?

Look to the First Reading.

I have not rebelled, have not turned back; I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who tore out my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting. (Is 50:5)

These words, actually written many centuries before Jesus, represent a passive surrender. Is it a kingly action, this passive surrender? You or I would have shouted, “my God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” The Responsorial Psalm says exactly these words, and Jesus too will say them from the cross.

Are they the words of a king?

The Second Reading answers this question with the famous passage from Paul's letter to the Philippians, Chapter 2, stating that Jesus did not regard being in the form of God as something to cling to—for safety or honor or whatever other reason. As the greatest king of all, he was able to empty himself out, to become like a slave, obedient even to death on the cross.

Isn't this the complete opposite of kingliness as we think of it. Isn't it a mockery of kingship?

No. It is the true basis of leadership, even though we do not see it very often in today's world. Serve the people, no matter what. Pull a kingdom together, making it safe, a place of abundance. Jesus, the true leader, lets go of everything in allegiance to God and in service of the people.

Let us be still this Sunday and listen.

John Foley, SJ

## Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

April 5, 2020

St. Stephens Indian Mission

www.saintstephensmission.com

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33 St. Stephens Road

PO Box 250

St. Stephens, WY 82524

Fr. Jim Heiser.....Pastor

Fr. Hugo Blotsky, OSB.....Substitute Priest

Sr. Monica Suhayda, CSJ.....Past. Asst./ Gift Shop 856-4330

Patti McMahan.....Director of Religious Education

### Blessed Sacrament & St. Josephs

332-9090

Sr. Teresa Frawley, OSF.....Past. Asst./Director of Religious Education

**Please view the Diocese of Cheyenne website [dioceseofcheyenne.org](http://dioceseofcheyenne.org) as they have added a link that includes information on the Church's response to the coronavirus outbreak. There is also a link to view Sunday Mass celebrated by Bishop Steven. The link is very helpful and provides many, many resources to join in prayer, especially during Holy Week.**

**Reminder there is no daily Mass, no Sunday Mass, or Adoration. All public meetings (including AA and Bible Study) normally held on the Mission grounds are also suspended until further notice. The gift shop is also closed. The office is closed to the public as we encourage everyone to stay home. You may call 851-2912 in an emergency otherwise calls to the parish office will be returned as soon as possible. These restrictions are necessary as it is imperative we are responsible and act in solidarity for the common good. Bulletins will be posted to the parish website at [www.saintstephensmission.com](http://www.saintstephensmission.com).**

**Please remember the church is open for private prayer every day from 8am-7pm. Continue to pray for the end of this pandemic. God Bless!**

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♦ Come in seeking; come in wondering; come in hurting. Come into this house ♦  
♦ of companionship and compassion. Come in. You are welcome here. Our ♦  
♦ faith Family opens its doors to you and in the name of Christ, bids you ♦  
♦ Welcome! ♦  
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*The purpose of St. Stephen's Indian Mission, the presence of the Roman Catholic Church among the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho, is to grow into a strong community of believers, sharing our lives in the Holy Spirit, forming one welcoming People of God, who are committed to Jesus Christ, His gospel and mission.*

## Readings April 6th through April 12th:

Mon: Is 42:1-7; Ps 27:1-3, 13-14; Jn 12:1-11  
 Tue: Is 49:1-6; Ps 71:1-4a, 5ab-6ab, 15, 17  
 Wed: Is 50:4-9a; Ps 69:8-10, 21-22, 31, 33-34; Mt 26:14-25  
 Thur: Ex 12:1-8, 11-14; Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18; 1 Cor 11:23-26; Jn 13:1-5  
 Fri: Is 52:13-53:12; Ps 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25; Heb 4:14-16, 5:7-9; Jn 18:1-19:42  
 Sat: Gn 1:1-2:2; Ps 104: 1-2, 5-6, 12-14, 24, 35; Ex 14:15-15:1 (Ps) Ex 15:1-6, 17-18;  
 Is 54:5-14; Ps 30:2, 4-6, 11-13; Bar 3:9-15, 32-4:4; Ps 19:8-11; Rom 6:3-11;  
 Ps 118:1-2, 16ab-17, 22-23; Mt 28:1-10  
 Sun: Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23; Col 3:1-4; Jn 20:1-9

Father Hugo is celebrating a PRIVATE Mass every day so the Mass for the scheduled intentions are still being celebrated. Please feel free to call and leave a message if you have an intention. God bless.

### Mass Intentions this week

4/4:	Saturday	Mike Buffalo
4/5:	Sunday	For all people affected by COVID-19 or any serious illness, the elderly and homebound, as well as all medical personnel and caregivers for the sick.
4/6:	Monday	+Benedictine Monks
4/7:	Tuesday	+Lisa Rixen
4/8:	Wednesday	+Joe & +Mary Job
4/9:	Thursday	Manguia Family
4/10:	Friday	Good Friday Service
4/11:	Saturday	Those who are struggling
4/12:	Sunday	Tyler Brown on his birthday

In the spirit of justice and transparency, the Diocese of Cheyenne must report that two credible allegations of sexual misconduct with adolescent females have been made against Father Joseph Fraher, a priest of the Diocese of Cheyenne. These occurred in the 1950's when he was assigned to the parishes in Sheridan and Ranchester. The first allegation was reported in 1990, and we became aware of it in March 2019 due to the clergy file review. After the June 2019 publication of the list of Catholic clergy with substantiated allegations of sexual abuse of minors, the second allegation was reported in August 2019. Father Fraher has also served in parishes located in Newcastle, Rock Springs, Lander, Jeffrey City, Hudson, Laramie, Riverton, Gillette, Worland, Wheatland, and Chugwater, as well as St. Rose of Lima Parish and St. Joseph's Children's Home in Torrington. He was ordained in 1950 and retired in 1995. Father Fraher currently resides in Cheyenne. Father Fraher has been restricted from celebrating the sacraments publicly and also from any contact with minors. The Diocese has provided outreach to the victims, from 1993 to 2008 and from August 2019 to present. If you or anyone you know has been a victim of sexual abuse by a member of the clergy, or if you suspect abuse of a minor, we urge you to contact your local law enforcement agency or the Department of Family Services. Upon notification of authorities or if you have questions, please contact Chancellor Jean Chrostoski at 307-638-1530, ext. 105 (jchrostoski@dioceseofcheyenne.org) or Diocesan Victim Assistance Coordinator.

Blessed Palms will be available at the church in St. Josephs beginning at 11am on Sunday and will be available at St. Stephens church beginning at noon on Sunday. Please practice social distancing when obtaining palms for your home. God bless.

The churches at St. Josephs and St. Stephens will be open daily from 8am-7pm for private prayer. No more than 10 people are to be in the church at one time.

Praised be Jesus Christ!

Praise Him now and always.

My dear friends in Christ,

May the Lord's peace be with you! Though we are in troubling times, I nonetheless hope you have found cause for consolation. During this Easter season, let us recall how God has been active in our lives.

We remain an Easter people, though our experience right now feels like we are in the upper room with the disciples. Even though it is not the account for this year's celebration of Easter, I encourage you to read Luke 24:36-49. In this passage, we see Jesus appear to the disciples in Jerusalem. As we read this passage, we receive insight into what God continues to do for us even though we cannot celebrate sacramentally.

During this account of the resurrection, we see that the disciples are afraid. Jesus recognizes this fear and this isolation because he experienced something very similar when he was alone on the cross. To help ease this fear and shock, he gives them the gift of peace. At this time, let us find creative ways to grant each other this same gift of peace from our risen Lord!

Christ was transformed through his resurrection from the dead. He still had the marks of his suffering and death, but they could not constrain him. In the same way, our God is bigger than our present adversity. God continues to call to us as his Church, and we still remain transformed by the grace we have celebrated together in the sacraments.

We remain the Church because of what our Lord has done for us. It might still feel like we are in the upper room, but just as the disciples received new life from their encounter with the risen Lord, so shall we. In these trying times, God still asks us to live as the mystical Body of Christ, into which our sacraments have transformed us.

Please remain open to communications from me, from the parish, and from the diocese as we find new ways to encourage each other in faith, hope, and love. As from the beginning of our current crisis, the COVID-19 webpage for the Diocese of Cheyenne has helpful prayer resources, activities for families, models for worship at home, and updates from Bishop Steven. You can find those at [dioceseofcheyenne.org/covid19](http://dioceseofcheyenne.org/covid19). Join me also for Mass there each Sunday.

God's grace is real, and we can look to the transformed, risen life of Christ as evidence. God's grace is at work among us at this very moment, just as God remained active and alive while Jesus was in the tomb.

Please pray for me, as I continue to pray for each of you. In the words of Julian of Norwich, remember, "all shall be well, all shall be well, in all manner of things all shall be well."

In the Lord's friendship,

*Father Jim*