



DEACON
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WHOLLY WEAK 20/20

FIRST OF ALL, BOY DO I MISS YOU FOLKS! I REALLY LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING, BEING WITH, AND WORSHIPPING TOGETHER AGAIN. HOPEFULLY SOON! THAT SAID, HERE WE ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HOLIEST WEEK OF THE YEAR. SURE DOESN'T FEEL THE SAME DOES IT? WITH NO OPPORTUNITIES TO GATHER AND WORSHIP AS A COMMUNITY IT MIGHT EVEN SEEM AS THOUGH EASTER HAS BEEN CANCELED.

These eight days, spanning from Palm Sunday, with our Lords triumphant entry into Jerusalem, Holy Thursday in which the Eucharist **AND** priesthood were instituted and **ARE** reaffirmed, Good Friday on which we solemnly recall a brutal death on our behalf, and climaxing with Easter when that death is defeated and **ALL** believers are given the hope of eternal life riding on the coat tails of Christs' victory.

And we're denied it **ALL**!

But if we take a moment, look at things from a different, maybe even **MORE** Christian slant, rather than with the usual hind-sight, we can look forward and envision an opportunity given.

Maybe this Holy Week 2020 is shining a spotlight on just how, with clearer, 20/20 vision, see how fully, wholly weak we are. Wholly weak 20/20!

This Easter, the Easter we're **NOT** given, **IS** the Easter we are forced to be livin'. This week, which might be leading us to feel un-whole and weak, **IS** regardless **STILL** the holiest of weeks.

In a very real way we can more appreciate **HIS** hardship as we endure ours. His march from waving green palms from the ones who hailed Him to the bloody red palms from the ones who nailed Him, can become **OUR** journey too.

Never losing sight of the victory that the pain assured. So let's, in a very real sense, shoulder **OUR** cross, the cross of this unprecedented time of uncertainty and stress, of having no idea and no control over what's to happen. Maybe we can identify it all, feel the feelings that Jesus felt on this week that we commemorate.

PALM SUNDAY

Boy! Who would have thought at the beginning of Lent that something we **ALL** would be giving up was palms? But, last I checked, these visual aids of faith that we have become so accustomed to having strategically placed around our dwellings, have no expiration date. Last years will work just fine.

The real point of the day is to set our focus on the week to come, to place ourselves in the middle of that fickle crowd of the Gospel and with no one but ourselves be totally honest in asking and answering, "*How would I have fared?*" or maybe more importantly "How **DO** I fare?" In a society that demands more and more that we be less and less Christian, am I bold or do I fold? Are we fully committed to our faith no matter **WHERE** we are and **WHO** we're with or do we compromise ourselves to try and fit in? If so, aren't we basically saying "*Crucify him!*"

HOLY THURSDAY

What a beautiful celebration. It's the night we reflect on and give thanks for the institution of the Eucharist **AND** the priesthood that could effect it. "Do this in memory of me."

Not a request, a command, that right now we are unable to oblige. It's **HARD**, not coming together **AS** a body to receive **THE BODY**. But truly, right now, it's what's best **FOR** the body. Short term pain, long term gain.

Hopefully, this 'season without' will cause us to be more appreciative of this great gift we're given once we can partake of it and receive the graces that flow from it once again.

May it also be in the front of our minds that another key element of this evening, perhaps the most popular part, is the washing of feet. It symbolizes the **FACT** that He and we are made to serve, to reach out and help out when and where ever we see a need.

To help make this week extra holy, look for opportunities to grab your pitcher and basin, wrap a towel around you waist and keep another in your hand, kneel down before those in need and be willing to do what needs done. "*I came to serve not be served*" must be our attitude.

Wipe wounds, soothe sores, and heal harms done. Love others as He loves you.

GOOD FRIDAY

I think we **ARE IN** the very middle of a “*Good Friday time*”. There’s and eerie silence, a bare altar and the tabernacle is empty. Seemingly. Central to this liturgy are our Solemn Intercessions.

These are 10 beautifully crafted Prayers of supplication that begin with “*For Holy Church*” and end with “*For Those in Tribulation*”. Never, at least in my lifetime, have the two ever been so closely linked.

This year a special 11th has been added for the help and hope needed to over-come this virus that has invaded us.

Use this day to **REALLY, TRULY** pray to God as never before. Usually, following the intercessions, the Adoration of the Cross takes place.

Here we approach and in some way pay our respect for and show our love toward Christ and His cross.

If possible, place a crucifix someplace where you give catch sight of it throughout the day.

If you can, begin the day by reading one of the accounts given of the Passion. Pray for any and all causes you can think of or for needs that arise throughout the day.

Pause and pray as you pass by your cross.

Do these things, and even though you can’t get to you church on Good Friday, it can **BE** a **GREAT** Friday.

THE EASTER VIGIL

My favorite night of the year, leading to the bestest day of the year! At the Vigil, the Church starts out very dark. A fire is started the flame blessed, the Paschal Candle is marked, blessed, and lit.

With chant, it is carried in procession to the ambo where, as it’s placed in it’s stand, almost all the rest of the lights of the Church are lit. At this point the Easter Proclamation, The Exsultet is sang.

For the first time **EVER**, I was scheduled to sing it this year. You don’t think this whole flu thing is Gods’ way of sparing you that do you? Anyway, it’s just a beautiful celebration. Numerous readings walk us through Salvation history showing how time and again how God uses the worst of situations to prompt and provide the greatest of graces.

How even when mankind is at it’s very worst, He was doing His very best, how even our disdain led to our gain. **INCREDIBLE!** We **KILLED** Him, briefly, and He gave us life eternal in return.

Think about that! There is no resurrection without a crucifixion. Out of the darkness comes a light. **WE ARE EASTER PEOPLE!** We believe that darkness and evil **ARE** overcome, that our most important tools are patience, perseverance and **PRAYER**, that to become our very best, as a person and as a people, we’ve got to endure some tests. We need to be tried. Then we will find, as St. Paul did, that “*when I am weak, then I am strong*”.

On our own we **ARE** fully, wholly weak but as one, with one another we are strong. Let’s take that idea of “wholly weak” into this holy week and ask for Gods strengthening grace. This time of testing **WILL** pass, the stone **Will** be rolled away.

Christ **DOES** prevail and we will emerge bigger, brighter, better than before. Jesus won and we **ARE** Church Triumphant! Though some doors may be temporarily closed let’s open our hearts all the more and remember that though maybe it seems like we “*missed*” Easter, Easter and all it’s graces **WON’T** miss us.

May all of you have a **VERY** blessed Easter season and beyond.

Deacon Matt Lorent

