

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS

PALM SUNDAY



Luke 19:28-40 | Phil 2:6-11 | Luke 22:14-23:56

Today we read the passion narrative from the Gospel of St Luke. It is not by any means for the faint hearted. Even if it is familiar to us, we should try to remember how extraordinary it is. After so many centuries of cruelty, crucifixion still ranks as one of the most appalling things people have ever thought to do to their fellow humans. Yet this was how God chose to show the depth of his love. God was prepared to go to any lengths for us. The letter to the Philippians says that Jesus did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave. Why? The only possible explanation is love. Anyone who has loved another knows that it will inevitably bring a share of suffering. Jesus walks alongside all who suffer. He shares their cross as they share his.

The fact that crucifixion was so common in the Roman world should also make us pause for a moment. Jesus lived and died in a world in which people were routinely degraded. He met plenty of them in his travels, people cast by the wayside, and helped many. For those without power, life was fragile, even cheap. Has much changed? Throughout Lent, Caritas Australia has invited us to share the work of Project Compassion. The stories we have encountered remind us that the world is still an uneven field. Project Compassion invites us to respond in love to free people in captivity to very challenging circumstances. It invites us in a small way to carry the cross, to live in hope of the Resurrection.

Perhaps this week, as well as joining in the services of Holy Week, we can take some time to sit quietly with the passion narrative from Luke's Gospel on our own. Think about all the characters we meet: Peter, Judas, Pilate, Herod, the women of Jerusalem, Simon of Cyrene, the soldiers, the two criminals, the women from Galilee, the centurion, Joseph of Arimathea. Try to see the events from each of their perspectives. Then quietly see them from your own perspective, from your world in 2022. Pray in humble gratitude.