

WEEKLY REFLECTIONS PALM SUNDAY

Isaiah 50:4–7 | Philipians 2:6–11 | Mark 14:1–15:47 or Mark 15:1–39

Written by Michael McGirr

We see images of the cross everywhere, from school uniforms to hospital buildings. Perhaps it is so commonplace that it doesn't stop us in our tracks the way it should. The cross of Jesus is the best key we have for understanding the mystery of God's love. God's compassion for the human family took Jesus to a lonely and brutal execution. Jesus was the victim of appalling injustice and degradation. His experience asks us to try to make the world more just and to revere the dignity of every person. 'Whatever you do to the least of my sisters and brothers, you do to me.' This is part of the reason why Project Compassion has, for 60 years, been part of our Lenten observance.

This year, Holy Week begins with the reading of the passion story from Mark's Gospel. Even in busy lives, we should try to set time aside to spend with this extraordinary story, not to rush it. Gently take a little at a time and ask for the grace to be close to Jesus. In the Spiritual Exercises, St Ignatius asks us 'to consider how the divinity hides itself.'

One way to spend time with the passion story is to take a different character each week and quietly ponder what it looked like to them and what they may have felt. Here is a suggestion:

- Sunday – Judas Iscariot
- Monday – Simon Peter
- Tuesday – The high priest
- Wednesday – Pontius Pilate
- Thursday – Simon of Cyrene
- Friday – The centurion
- Saturday – Mary of Magdala

Let us remember a beautiful prayer of just seven words that was taught to Pope Francis by his grandmother: Jesus, make my heart more like yours.



Five-year-old Clark (right) kisses his younger brother Egzy Grey (3) on the cheek in their small home in Quezon City, Philippines. Photo: Richard Wainwright/Caritas Australia.