



## THE PRIMATE'S MESSAGE HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2025

ON Palm Sunday the Church begins the journey of Holy Week. A journey from the crowded streets of Jerusalem to the empty tomb of Easter morning. An exodus from the bondage of sin to the freedom of salvation through the Cross of Christ.

As Scripture reveals, for forty years the people of Israel journeyed through the wilderness. Their exodus from bondage in Egypt to the Promised Land was a time of challenge and testing. God had freed His people, called them 'Chosen', set them apart from the other nations, and invited them into a sacred covenant – they would be His people, He would be their God.

The journey was not easy. Temptations and trials abounded. It was a pilgrimage not only from the oppression of Pharaoh but from the bondage of sin. The lure of the pagan nations around them was ever present. The struggle to be faithful always at hand. Even when some turned away from God, God remained faithful. The old way of life had to be left behind so that a new way of living as the chosen people of God could be realized. The tension between the old and the new was never far away. Jubilation was coupled with grumbling; the desire for the ways of the world was at odds with the desire for God.

There is a reason why the Church has us recall the Exodus in Lent and Passiontide. The Exodus is not only part of salvation history, it is part of our own story of redemption.

The journey in faith from sin and death to salvation and new life is our story, our calling, our pilgrimage. God's people didn't appreciate all that He had given them until it was taken away. We too, in our journey of faith, do not always appreciate God's blessings until they are withdrawn.

We know from our personal stories, our personal experiences, that blessings, well-being, health, loved ones, a future imagined, can suddenly be taken away. It is then that the spiritual wilderness becomes very real to us; even as it did for the people of Israel. Their journey through the wilderness is our spiritual journey through the valleys and mountains, the winding roads, and narrow paths which mark our way in life. As the Chosen People made their way through the desert to the Promised Land, so we make our spiritual way through the Cross of Calvary to the promise of eternal life.

Through the days of Holy Week, we will be drawn back to the Exodus, to Mount Sinai, to the giving of the Law, to the ritual sacrifices for sin. We will be drawn back to our Lord's Passion, to the Garden of Gethsemane, to the judgement seat of Pilate, to the giving of the new Law of Love, and to the shedding of the Saviour's Blood upon the wood of the Cross.

The journey through the desert was not easy for God's Chosen People. Walking the way of the Cross is not easy for us, the Redeemed of Christ. Behind the story of the Passion is the story of our own lives as we struggle with sin and temptation. Yet the Passion of Christ is also a story of love – the unfathomable love of God for His people. The Passion is the journey we walk with Jesus to His Cross; and it is our journey to the Cross for our salvation.

C.S. Lewis, writing to a colleague about Christ's Passion, wrote: "As you said in that essay of yours one cannot in the Simon of Cyrene moment see the cross from the Joseph of Arimathea point of view, but one can remember that the other side is real." As we recall from holy Scripture, Simon of Cyrene carried Jesus' cross before it was accomplished; Joseph of Arimathea offered a tomb once it was finished. Sometimes our journey, with its joys and sorrows, sufferings and setbacks, makes it difficult to see the far horizon, to see God's plan and purpose. To see through Jesus' Passion and Crucifixion to the Resurrection but it is the key that holds the world and each of us in God's grace.

Holy Week is a reminder that Jesus lived out God's story of redemption for us. His Passion becomes our Passion story. Our journey as the redeemed of Christ takes us from the Cross to the promise of a new Heaven and a new Earth. A reminder that we've been bought with a price. We have been redeemed by the Blood of Christ. Jesus offered Himself, the spotless Victim, the one, true and everlasting Sacrifice. By means of His passion and death, burial and resurrection, we are redeemed and receive the promise of eternal life.

From Palm Sunday through to Good Friday on to the glory of Easter Day, each of us, in our own way, in our own spiritual journey, will come to know what it means to follow in faith the One Who came among us, "Who gave His life a ransom for many."

As we enter into Holy Week leading to the blessings of Easter, we know our journey of faith is not yet complete. We have more trials, more challenges, more difficulties and struggles to encounter and overcome but we do so in the knowledge that we are not alone. The Cross stands before us, our crucified and risen Saviour ever with us.

In these days, may we draw nearer to God through the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of His beloved Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. May we ever be ready to share His Gospel message of salvation to a waiting world, even as we progress in our journeys, our own stories of faith.

I extend to you my blessing and prayers for a deeply spiritual Holy Week and an equally joyous Eastertide.

+Shane  
*Palm Sunday 2025*