

A Coffee with Alessio



Holy Week- “The blue ribbon event of the Liturgical Year” – Part II

In my last column, I wrote about the drama of Holy Week beginning with Palm Sunday. That was like the “calm before the storm.” In this column I am going to write about the second part of Holy Week, which begins today on Holy Thursday with what we call the Easter Triduum. A triduum is three days of preparation, in this case for Easter.

On Holy Thursday there is so much ritual and drama beginning with the Mass of the Last Supper, at which we recall when Jesus instituted the Eucharist or what we call the Mass. He used the common every day elements of Bread and Wine and changed them into His own Body and Blood. He commanded His Apostles and us, to do that in remembrance of Him. That is what we do at each and every Mass; we remember the gift of the selfless love of Jesus, and we also receive His Body and Blood. For as Saint Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes” (1 Corinthians 11:26). In addition to the Last Supper, Jesus washed the feet of his twelve Apostles. Saint Peter is an interesting character in all of this. At first, he didn’t want Jesus to wash his feet, but then he wanted Jesus to his feet, hands and head. I think Saint Peter must have been so confused through all of this drama. I mentioned last time about commitment and the Apostles not knowing what they were getting themselves into by accepting the call to follow Jesus, because when it got too hard, they fell in a heap. They fell asleep while Jesus was

praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. I wonder what emotions were going through Jesus' head at that time, and in particular how his closest friends let him down. I think we can all identify with Jesus here. We have all relied upon others, at one time or another only to be let down.

The drama doesn't end on Holy Thursday though. Things are just "starting to heat up", because on Good Friday the Passion story is read. In this story we hear about the trial of Jesus, his painful journey (passion) that lead to his crucifixion and death. I liken Good Friday to a crime scene in a show such *Law and Order* or *CSI: Miami*. We'll call it *CSI: Jerusalem*. You see, they had the "wrong guy" on Good Friday, just as they do sometimes in the crime shows. Even one of the two criminals who was crucified on either side of Jesus worked out that the soldiers had the wrong guy. What did Jesus say at this point; "Father, forgive them they do not know what they are doing." A powerful statement indeed! But Jesus, would make things right, when he rose from the dead on Easter Sunday morning. Everything that went wrong during the week was vindicated, and it is this vindication of Jesus, that makes Holy Week the blue ribbon event of the liturgical calendar.

As you know during Lent there has been no Alleluia in any part of the liturgy. We will take that up again at the Easter Vigil. I hope you have a joyful setting of the Gospel Acclamation prepared for the Easter Vigil which you will be able to reuse throughout the Easter Season. Alleluia, is a cry of joy. So just as we are an "Easter people", we are also an "Alleluia people", who will sing this song of joy in praise of the Risen Christ! The "David Jones stock take sale" that we have been doing during Lent that I mentioned a few weeks ago, should turn into a "100% clearance sale" during Holy Week, so that we **totally** declutter our lives of what isn't important and **totally focus on Jesus** and those things which are important in our lives. I hope you have had a wonderful Lent. I have enjoyed decluttering.

I am looking forward to playing a joyful postlude at the end of Mass this weekend and I will "pull all the stops out." I hope you do the same. I can't wait to celebrate Easter with joy and having a few pancakes breakfasts along the way, especially those ones with cream, ice-cream, berries and maple syrup on top! I'll know the Lord has

indeed risen, when I have one of those breakfasts during Easter week!

I wish you all a very happy and Holy Easter!

Mr Alessio Loiacono
Music Field Officer

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