

# *A Take-away Coffee with Alessio*



## Holy Week 2020: A reflection

This week's column will be the last one till school goes back next term. The first column for next term will be published on Friday 1 May. As I mentioned in last week's column, the series on the Stations of the Cross will resume next Lent and will pick up at the Eleventh Station. I thought for this week I would offer some thoughts on Holy Week in light of the fact we will celebrate the rituals very differently this year.

For the liturgies of Holy Week 2020 we won't be physically present at the rituals and various parts of the ritual will be omitted as well. We are fortunate that with the capabilities of modern technology Masses (and other devotions) are being streamed around various parts of the world and in most cases can be viewed on demand. Yes, watching Mass on TV is a very different way of participating in the liturgy. However, that's the best that can be done for the moment, so we should avail ourselves of that opportunity. If and when things go back to normal we should return to being present in our churches for Mass (health and weather permitting).

So, yesterday on Palm Sunday, the church sings "Hosanna to the Son of David", just as the crowds did when they welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem on that first Palm Sunday. On Holy Thursday we remember the institution of the Holy Eucharist - Jesus offering Himself to the Father and giving us a memorial, by feeding us with His Body and Blood. At the moment we cannot receive the Eucharist, we can offer a Spiritual Communion.

My Jesus, I believe that You are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I long for You in my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though You have already come, I embrace You and unite myself entirely to You; never permit me to be separated from You.

So we must continue our prayer life so that whilst we cannot be nourished by the Lord's Body and Blood, we can be strengthened by His Word. Reading a passage from Scripture every day will help us all in this regard. The early Catholics in this country and so many others had no access to a priest or the Eucharist for many years after they first settled in a new land. All they had to keep them going was prayer. We must do the same.

A Hymn for Holy Thursday is As I Have Done For You. You can listen to this hymn here [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGgb8Q\\_C1iE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGgb8Q_C1iE)

On Good Friday, we commemorate the passion and death of Our Lord. Oh, how that has taken on a completely new meaning this year! There will be no public veneration of the Cross, and the directive from the Vatican has suggested that the Stations of the Cross be moved to either 14 September (the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross) or September 15 (the Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows). We are all in some way, shape or form bearing the cross of Covid-19. As I said in my column a couple of weeks ago when I wrote about the Tenth Station - Jesus knows only too well our crosses and the hardship that they bring to each of us to bear. Just as Mary stood at the foot of her Son's Cross on that first Good Friday, so too does she stand at the foot of our crosses.

Two hymns to help you pray on Good Friday are Were You There?  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLM1rF52z1I>

and O Sacred Head  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXLwj-AaJqk>

There will be no lighting of the Easter Fire this year. The priest will light the Easter candle in the darkened church. We have certainly experienced a lot of darkness during Lent. However, Jesus rose from the dead to dispel the darkness that pervades our world. We will rise from Covid-19, but when things go back to normal, it will be a new normal. Hopefully, people will continue to be more vigilant about the spreading of germs, and how basic sanitary practices such as washing hands with warm water soap are a necessary part of preventing germs and viruses from spreading like wildfire.

The liturgy of the Easter Vigil sees the return of the "Alleluia" to our liturgy. We have not heard Alleluia since the day before Ash Wednesday. Do we have much sing "Alleluia" about this Easter? Who knows? - but we must profess and live out our faith in the Risen Christ, being as helpful as we can to people, even if we just say hello and offer a simple smile. Just as the disciples recognized Jesus in the Breaking of Bread on the Road to Emmaus, so too may others see the Risen Christ in us, by the good works we do and the joyful way we live out our Catholic faith. I guess one "Alleluia" out of all this crisis is we might have an opportunity to get to finishing all those tasks on our to-do list that we never get to.

I hope the cafés and restaurants will be able to offer a dine in service soon. Those places provide opportunities to get fresh air and enjoy a delicious coffee and snack. We will

wait and see what happens. I will find a takeaway pastry to enjoy on Easter Sunday afternoon. Two hymns to assist you celebrate Easter Sunday are:

Jesus Christ Is Ris'n Today

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9a41CvVEHw>

and

Jesus Is Risen Let Us Sing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glCv5zDx-2M>

So, as we tune into the Holy Week liturgies via the Internet this year, may we participate in them and journey with the Lord on His Way to Calvary. That is not the end though. The empty tomb on that first Easter Sunday morning will be our final destination too. One day we hope to rise to New Life in Christ as well. Let us continue to pray for the medical people who are doing their best to treat and contain the virus. Those people are "glorifying the Lord by their life."

Till next term - enjoy your take-away coffee and I hope and pray you have a happy and holy Easter and that the Risen Christ will dwell in your houses, families and workplaces as we continue our pilgrimage of faith in Jesus.

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