

Palm Sunday is in Your House in Holy Week 2020 by Fr Michael

Today, in the Gospel for Palm Sunday, the disciples asked Jesus: “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” Jesus replied to the disciples in a manner that you and I can relate to. Basically, in giving his disciples instructions regarding to whom they were to pass on his request, his request can be received as if he is asking ourselves in the midst of the current pandemic: “My time is near. It is at *your house* that I am keeping Passover with my disciples (emphasis added).” Essentially, each person’s own home has become the local place of worship given that all churches have been closed.

In the Early Church, the home was often the place of worship, “together with all [their] household.” (Acts of the Apostles 18:8). “In our own time, in a world often alien and even hostile to faith, believing families are of primary importance as centers of living, radiant faith ... The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason the family home is rightly called ‘the domestic church,’ a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1656, 1666).

Although we are distancing ourselves socially, as well as from our local parish churches, we are not called to distance ourselves from Jesus; otherwise, we will become like Peter when he was in the grip of fear. When Jesus was arrested after celebrating the Last Supper, “Peter followed him at a distance” (Matthew 26:58). In addition to keeping close to Jesus in participating in the live-streamed Masses and other prayers, such as Morning Prayer and the Rosary which are being live-streamed from our Parish, we would do well to avoid following Jesus at a distance by exercising Christian charity. On this point, the Archbishop stated in his Pastoral Letter on 25 March 2020: “[To help] the frail, the elderly and isolated ... the Archdiocese is working alongside CatholicCare to roll out a volunteer program to help the needy access groceries, cooked meals, medicine and other necessities at this difficult time.”

Not all parishioners are able to assist with his charitable work, as some are senior in years and are thereby vulnerable to the Coronavirus. But if you are a healthy parishioner over the age of 18 and would like to assist with CatholicCare’s volunteer program, you can register your name and best contact details with Fairfield Parish’s Events and Marketing Coordinator Joyce at: events@olrfairfield.org.au

The Archbishop has requested that people in each parish “who are young and healthy enough carry out these visits to the needy.” This service will provide a noteworthy means of giving witness to the Gospel. As the Archbishop states: “Many of our frail and elderly will feel particularly isolated at this time, as only essential services continue to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic. A service like this is critical to not only ensuring the needy get food and medicine, but human company as well to combat long-term loneliness and isolation.”

So far, seven young adults have registered to assist with CatholicCare’s volunteer program. If you are a healthy young adult, I invite you pray about the prospect of joining them in order to give witness to the love of God during this pandemic.

