

Father O'Connor's Homily for 29 March 2026
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord-A

Isaiah 50: 4-7

Philippians 2: 6-11

Matthew 26: 14 – 27: 66

Wasn't that a prayerful moment? We just participated in the moving Passion account from Saint Matthew's Gospel about our Savior's betrayal and death. And there will be many other such holy moments for us during this Holy Week.

It is a week of grace – with lots of opportunities to hear “the ordinary and extraordinary voices of God.”

And so today I issue my annual challenge: If you come to church on Palm Sunday and don't come back to church again until Easter Sunday, you are going to miss a whole lot!

This Holy Week's events and times and places are listed in the bulletin and on our parish website and newsletter, in our mailings and on the video screens here in church. But by way of a personal invitation, let me just give you an overview of opportunities before us this Holy Week.

Morning Mass on Monday is at 9:00 AM at Saint Joseph and on Tuesday at 8:00 AM at Nativity.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place at Nativity on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 11:00 AM until 10:00 PM.

On Holy Thursday evening, the Mass of the Lord's Supper begins at 7:00 PM in Nativity Church. Saint Joseph musicians and choristers will be leading us in song.

That evening we celebrate 1) the institution of the Eucharist, 2) the institution of the priesthood and 3) Jesus' mandate – command – that we wash each other's feet in humble service.

Holy Thursday Mass is followed by an opportunity for Sacramental Confession and for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 9:00 PM.

Good Friday, the day Jesus died for us, is a day of abstaining from meat for all of us who are 14 years of age and older; and also a day of fasting for those of us between 18 and 59 with one principal meal, two lesser

meals and no snacks in between – but water, coffee, tea, other liquids are fine.

Good Friday is the only day of the year that the Church does not celebrate Mass. Instead we celebrate the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion, at 12:00 Noon at Saint Joseph Church, which comes to us from 4th century Jerusalem and has three parts: 1) a Liturgy of the Word, with the Passion according to Saint John which will be sung this year, 2) the Veneration of the Cross by all in attendance and 3) a Communion Service with hosts consecrated the night before at the Mass of the Lord's Supper.

This Liturgy of the Lord's Passion will be followed by an opportunity for Sacramental Confession until 3:00 PM.

If you are not able to be here for this Noon Service, I encourage you, as you are able, to keep the "Three Hours" ["Tre Ore"] from 12:00 Noon until 3:00 PM, when Jesus hung upon the cross, as a time of quiet and prayerful reflection in your homes.

Good Friday evening at 7:00 PM will be a very special one here at Saint Joseph. Our Saint Joseph musicians and choristers [under the direction of Christina Dupre] will offer a Taize evening of music and reflections on the Lord's passion and death, following the Stations of the Cross that were given to us by Saint John Paul II.

On Holy Saturday morning, we will have the Blessing Easter Foods at 10:45 AM in Saint Joseph Church. Confessions will follow from 11:00 AM until 12:00 Noon.

The Easter Vigil Liturgy begins this year at 8:45 PM at Saint Joseph Church with the blessing of the new fire outdoors, built by our Scouts. We have seven already-baptized adults, who will be making a profession of faith and be Confirmed and receive their First Holy Communion and become fully-initiated members of our Catholic family.

And may I remind you that there is no 4:00 PM or 5:30 PM Mass on Holy Saturday here – or any place in the world! The Easter Vigil Liturgy is the first Mass of Easter and the earliest it can begin this year is 8:45 PM.

Our celebration continues Easter Sunday morning with Masses at 8:30 AM at Saint Joseph, and at 10:00 AM at Nativity, and at 11:30 AM at Saint Joseph, all with the renewal of our Baptismal promises. Please note that there will not be a 5:00 PM Mass on Easter Sunday evening.

Please see the bulletin for events that will be livestreamed this week.

This is a week of grace – with lots of opportunities to experience holy moments, and to hear “the ordinary and extraordinary voices of God.”

So I repeat my challenge: If you come to church on Palm Sunday and don't come back to church again until Easter Sunday, you are going to miss a whole lot!

Make this the best Holy Week that you have ever spent. And I guarantee you that you will be glad that you did. Happy Holy Week, everyone!