

HOLY FAMILY PARISH

3/24/2013 Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord



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Office Hrs: Monday to Friday - 8:30am to 4:30pm

Closed on Statutory Holidays

Calgary Diocesan: www.rcdiocese-calgary.ab.ca

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE

MONDAY MARCH 25TH:

STATIONS OF THE CROSS - 7:00PM - NET TEAM HOSTING

TUESDAY MARCH 26TH:

MASS AT 7:00PM FOLLOWED BY RECONCILIATION

WEDNESDAY MARCH 27TH

MASS AT 9:00AM & RECONCILIATION 7:30PM

THURSDAY MARCH 28TH:

MASS OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AT 7:00PM
FOLLOWED BY ADORATION UNTIL MIDNIGHT.

FRIDAY MARCH 29TH:

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICES AT 12:00PM & 3:00PM

SATURDAY MARCH 30TH:

BLESSING OF EASTER FOOD AT 11:00AM
AND THE EASTER VIGIL AT 8:00PM

SUNDAY MARCH 31ST:

THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD MASS AT 8:30AM & 10:30AM

Pastor - Rev. Philip Le
frphilip@holymh.ca

Associate Pastor -
Rev. Matthew Emmelkamp
fmattthew@holymh.ca

Deacons:

Rev. Mr. Robert Risling

Rev. Mr. Bill Schnitzler

Pastoral Care of the Sick

pager: 403-458-1445

Youth NET Ministry

medhatcatholicyouth@gmail.com

Medicine Hat Catholic Youth on Facebook

Mass Times

Saturday - 5:00 pm

Sunday - 8:30am, 10:30am & 6:00pm

Reconciliation: Saturday 3:00-4:00pm

"Gospel Acclamation (Philippians 2.8-9)
Glory & Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ! Christ became obedient for us to death, even death on a Cross. Therefore God exalted him, and gave him the name above every name.

**Glory & Praise to you,
Lord Jesus Christ!**

Welcome To Holy Family Parish

You have entered this church not as a stranger, but as a guest of God. Being a human, you enter this church as a creature of God; as a baptized person, you enter it as a son or daughter of the Father in Christ. This house of God is therefore your family home. Come in then with humility of mind, joy of heart and thanks on your lips. Acknowledge the Lord's presence in the Tabernacle and adore Him. Come in and pause in prayer in the midst of your busy life and its many worries. Be grateful for those who, for the Glory of God, built this place of worship with faith and sacrifice, and sanctified it with their songs and prayers.

Anyone who wishes to practice the Catholic faith by attending this church may consider this parish as his/her own parish. You simply need to register. Please indicate whether you are a new parishioner or have moved and are providing a new address. Thank you.

Name _____
Spouse _____
Address _____
Postal Code _____ Phone _____
Email _____



PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

MARCH 23/24, 2013

SUNDAY READINGS

Gospel (Luke 19:28-40). In triumphant glory Jesus comes into Jerusalem. The people spread their cloaks on the ground for him, wave olive branches and sing his honor.

First Reading (Is. 50:4-7). Suffering and shame await Christ in Jerusalem, but the prophet foretells that He will not turn back from His commitment to complete the work of salvation.

Second Reading (Phil. 2:6-11). Because of His humble obedience God has raised Christ on high and given Him the Name above all names.

Gospel (Luke 22:14-23:56). Christ humbled Himself unto death for our sake. Let us strive to live His example of unselfish love every day.

OPERATING FINANCES

(March 14-March 21, 2013)

-Cost to operate our Parish (Budget 2013) \$15,600

-General Collections: \$13,414

-Debt reduction (Mortgage) \$4,018

-Total Collections: \$17,432

-Exceed or (Shortfall) \$1,832

Special Collections

***Together in Action:.....\$551

***Priests Retirement Fund:.....\$10

***World Missions:.....\$17

***St Vincent de Paul:.....\$1,076

***CARO:.....\$35

***Mission Mexico:.....\$100

***NET Ministries:.....\$215

PARISH UPCOMING EVENTS & INTENTIONS

DAILY MASS MAY BE CANCELLED

IN THE CASE OF A FUNERAL

SUN, MAR 24TH PALM SUNDAY

- + **Mass: 8:30am** (Intention: Holy Family Parish)
- + 1st Communion/Reconciliation Class: 10:15am in the Faith Rm.
- + **Mass: 10:30am** (Intention: Holy Family Parish)
- + Children's Liturgy at 10:30 Mass
- + Library: open after morning Masses
- + 4th Degree Knights of Columbus Meeting: 2:30pm, at St. Patrick's Parish
- + Confirmation Class: 5:00pm in the Faith Room
- + **Mass: 6:00pm** (Intention: Holy Family Parish)
- + UNCHAINED: after 6:00pm Mass in HFP Hall

MON, MAR 25TH

- + **NO MASS HERE TODAY**
- + Chrism Mass: 7:30pm at St Mary's Cathedral in Calgary
- + Circle of Friends Prayer Group: 7:00pm at St. Joseph's Home
- + STATIONS OF THE CROSS -7:00PM - NET TEAM HOSTING

TUES, MAR 26TH

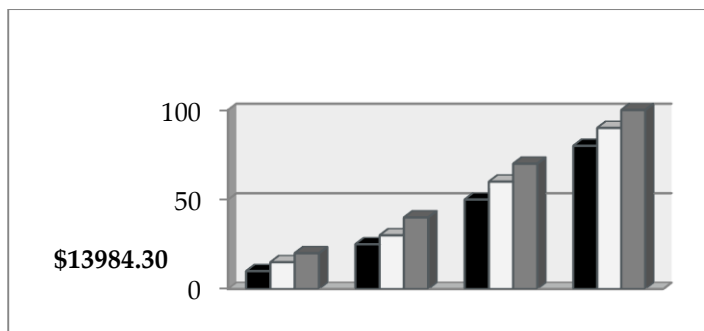
- + SVPD Meeting: 4:00pm at Holy Family Parish in the Hope Room
- + Light Weigh: 7:00pm in the Hope Room
- + **Mass: 7:00pm followed by Reconciliation**

WED, MAR 27TH

- +Women's Praise & Worship: 6:45am in the Faith Room
- + **Mass: 7:30am** at St. Michael's School
- + **Mass: 8:00am** at St. Patrick's School
- + **Mass: 9:00am**
- + Breakfast after Mass in Hall
- + Bible Study: 9:30am in the Faith Room
- + Ministry to the aged: 1:30pm - Sunnyside
- + Ministry to the aged: 3:30pm – Good Samaritans
- + Choir Practice (6pm Mass): 6:00pm
- + RCIA 7:00pm in the Faith Room
- +**Reconciliation: 7:30pm to 8:30pm**

*Together
in Action*

2013 Goal - \$55,151.48
YTD Donations: \$13,984.30



Thank you for your Generosity and Support !

THURS, MAR 28TH THE LORD'S SUPPER

+ Men's Prayer Group: 6:30am in the Charity Room
+ **Mass of the Lord's Supper: 7:00pm followed by Adoration**

FRI, MAR 29TH THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

+ **Good Friday Services: 12:00 Noon and 3:00pm**
+ OFFICE CLOSED TODAY

SAT, MAR 30TH HOLY SATURDAY

+ That Man is You: 8:30am – St. Patrick's Church Hall
+ **BLESSING of the EASTER FOOD: 11:00am**
+ **EASTER VIGIL: 8:00pm**

SUN, MAR 31ST THE RESURECTION OF THE LORD

+ **Mass: 8:30am**
+ **Mass: 10:30am**
+ **NO 6:00pm Mass**

NATIONAL CATHOLIC MISSION 2013

The National Catholic Mission 2013. *The Year of Faith* will be broadcast on Vision TV on Monday, March 25 (Part 1) and Tuesday March 26th (Part 2) at 4:00pm and repeated at 8:00pm. It will feature Fr. Ron Rolheiser, Fr. Anthony Gittins & Fr. Pat Fitzpatrick

ARE YOU IN A HURRY?

Fr. Philip would like to invite those who leave immediately following Communion during Sunday Mass to please stay for the final blessing and dismissal. This is a special time when we are "sent out" to be Christ to those we meet outside our Church doors: "**Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life**" or "**Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.**" This is an important message accompanied by God's blessing. Please don't dash out early and miss it. By the way, we have cookies, juice and coffee after the 10:30 am Mass. Please join us.

(The Liturgy Committee would say: "Those who are trying to leave early after Communion will be faced with our new "Church Bouncer" at the exit doors. Perhaps it would be best to remain until the Mass has officially ended").

NEW MINISTRY SCHEDULES

Please take the time to pick up your new schedules that have come out recently. The **Power Point and Sound Board** schedules are at the sound board. Also please find in the file folders beside the Vestment Room, schedules for the **Eucharistic Ministers next week**, and the **Hospitality** ministries now. **Please sign-up for Holy Week Liturgy.**

MONSIGNOR MCCOY HIGH SCHOOL BOTTLE DRIVE

Please bring your recyclable bottles to church with you on April 20 & 21st. McCoy is raising money so they can get to the Provincial Music Festival. The Shamrock Bottle Depot Truck will be at all Masses on April 20th and 21st. Please leave your bottles at the truck. Thank You!

ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

THE SOCIETY OF St. VINCENT DE PAUL (SVDP) is the volunteer group in our church that helps people in need using parishioner donations. They are dedicated and compassionate stewards that are committed to serving the less fortunate in the City of Medicine Hat. Their mission is to live the gospel message by serving Christ in the poor with love, respect, justice and joy. They meet weekly, travel in pairs and have personal contact with the poor by visiting them in their homes.

In 2012 they served some 644 people while conducting 281 home visits. The average assistance per person in 2012 was \$164.60. This assistance included rent, security deposits, utilities, food certificates, medical expenses, prescriptions, transportation, furniture, clothing, glasses etc. It is only through your generous support that SVDP was able to carry out this work. Please keep the SVDP volunteers and those in need in your prayers. Thank you for your care and concern.

LIGHT WEIGH

There is an orientation meeting for Light Weigh at 6pm, Tuesday April 2, 2013. in the Hope Room.

A TRIBUTE TO THE CARMELITE SISTERS

"**A Tribute to the Carmelite Sisters**": Fr. Fred Monk has recently published a book in honor of the Carmelite Sisters and their ministry to the elderly at St. Joseph's Home over the past 60+ years. The book covers the history of the Sisters and the Home and includes over 80 historic photographs. Order a copy at the parish office. Hard cover: \$50. Soft cover \$40. For further information and to view a preview online, email Fr. Fred at fmonk@shaw.ca

CARMELITE SISTERS FAREWELL

At the end of April, the Carmelite Sisters; Sister Mary Rita, Sister Mary Peter and Sister Mary Regina are leaving Medicine Hat.

We are hosting a celebration in honor of their many years of pastoral work & service to our seniors and to wish them well on their journey. Please join us on Sunday, April 21 at St. Patrick's Church, Medicine Hat. We will begin with 11:00 AM Mass, celebrated by Most Rev. Frederick Henry, D.D. Reception to follow downstairs at St. Patrick's

Church. RSVP: Anne Helfrich at: a-helfrich@shaw.ca or call 403 502-6237

NET TEAM NEWS

Equip Gr. 6-9 - Do you like music? Join us for a night on how music and pop culture can affect our lives and how they can help us grow in our faith! Friday April 5th at St. Patrick's Parish and Friday April 12th at Holy Family Parish, 7pm-9pm!

Unchained Gr. 10-12 - Who is Mary to you? Join us for a night on the Mother of God, Sunday March 24th from 7pm-9pm at Holy Family Parish!

Not so long ago, in a Vatican far far away, there was.....A New Pope! Join us for a night on the importance and the role of the Pope in our Church, Sunday April 7th from 7pm-9pm at Holy Family Parish!

****No Unchained on March 31st due to Easter! :) Happy Easter!**

Volunteers - Interested in volunteering in Youth Ministry? The NET Team invites you to share your love for God and your gifts with the youth of our parish! There are a variety of different things that we would love your help with, including giving a talk, leading a game, or leading small group for our Middle School/High School youth groups or Family Fundays, or helping with set up or background work. If you feel like you could help in other ways, you also have the options to donate snacks for our events, offer your home to host members of the team, or pray for the ministry. We will be starting our Leadership Training Series very soon, so please contact us at medhatcatholicyouth@gmail.com if you are interested in volunteering!

DEVELOPMENT & PEACE 3RD ANNUAL 2013 BENEFIT GALA

April 13th, 2013 at Our Lady of Grace Parish (Calgary) starting at 6:00pm. Bishop Frederick Henry will be the headline speaker. Featured is a full catered Dinner and Cultural Entertainment. Tickets are \$25 for adults, & \$17 for youth (11-17) and kids under 10 are free. Please call or email Doreen for tickets – 403-803-6605 or doreenonly@bell.net

2013 TOGETHER IN ACTION –TIA-

“...You will be my witnesses... Acts: 1: 8).

Have you done any almsgiving during Lent yet? Please contribute to the Together in Action.

A FATHER'S PROSPECTIVE

As a home owner, I often have a lot of work to do on the house. I often get my kids to help me, even though it would be easier and faster if I just did it myself. But I want them to help for several reasons. First, I don't want them to be lazy. Second, I want them to

have experience so that they will be confident to do things as adults. Third, I want them to feel like an important member of the family. Someone who does not help, is not a member, that person is a guest. Besides other reasons, it is so important that the children be participants' in the needs of the home. I wondered how from God's view point, like a father he wants us the help, not because he needs it, because we need to be important members of his family.

DO YOU HAVE A BELL?

We are going to ring bells during GLORIA at the Holy Thursday Mass, Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday to glorify God and emphasize the solemnity of the Mass. Please take a bell with you.

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE PRESENTATION

The parish would like to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the future. If you are interested, please come to the presentation night on Wednesday, April 10 in the church hall at 7 pm.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

With Passion Sunday we begin the final week of Lent and prepare ourselves to celebrate the Paschal Triduum. The *Rejoice in God's Mercy* program that runs in Advent and Lent has aimed to invite you to participate more readily and more easily in the sacrament of Reconciliation. However, the sacrament of Reconciliation is not only for Advent and Lent; it is a sacrament that Catholics can receive at any time. In addition to *Rejoice in God's Mercy* on Wednesdays and scheduled diocesan penitential services, most parishes have a regularly scheduled time for Reconciliation throughout the year. If you are not available at the scheduled time or if your situation is complicated and you think you might need more time than usual the sacrament is always available by appointment with the priest. Jesus never said it would be easy to follow him but he also gave us this sacrament to help us own up to our failings, receive his strength, and start anew. Whenever you need to experience God's forgiveness and love, *come, sit in this chair—rejoice in God's mercy.*

In addition to the regular parish schedule, the sacrament of Reconciliation will be available at parishes throughout the Diocese of Calgary all the **Wednesdays of Lent from 7:30 – 8:30pm. Come, sit in this chair—rejoice in God's mercy.**

Action: Take concrete steps to make the sacrament of Reconciliation an integral part of your life as a disciple of Christ.

PALM SUNDAY (March 23/24, 2013)

Each year we Christians celebrate the central mystery of our faith, the death and resurrection of Jesus; and each year our Jewish neighbors celebrate the feast of Passover commemorating God's liberation and protection of the Jewish people in the exodus from

Egypt. The links between the two feasts are profound. Easter, the Christian feast of liberation, was foreshadowed by the Jewish Feast of Passover. Jesus and his disciples, as faithful Jews, were gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate this great festival. It was in the context of the festival that Jesus' life drew to an end.

Every Mass on Palm Sunday should recall the entrance of the Lord Jesus into Jerusalem, coming to complete his paschal mystery. The celebration begins with the blessing of palms and procession. During the Liturgy of the Word we will hear the Passion story of the Lord.

CHRISM MASS (MONDAY, MAR. 25, @ 7: 30 PM, ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL)

The Mass of Chrism is concelebrated by the bishop and priests and attended by deacons from all parts of the diocese. It is the sign of unity and communion between the deacons, priests and their bishop. In this celebration priests and deacons will renew their promises at the ordination. The bishop also blesses three different OILs: Oil for Sacrament of the Sick (O.I), Oil for Catechumens (O.S) and Oil of Sacred Chrism (O.C).

HOLY THURSDAY: THE LORD'S SUPPER (MARCH 28 @ 7 PM)

3 parts of Holy Thursday:

- The washing of the Feet: The example of Service
- The Institution of the Eucharist.
- The Institution of the Priesthood.
- The reposition of the Blessed Sacrament to the confessional room after Mass;
- Adoration until midnight.
- Special collection for the poor in our parish.

GOOD FRIDAY, MARCH 29

Two Services begin at noon and 3 pm

3 Parts of Good Friday Service:

1. -Liturgy of the Word
 2. -Veneration of the Cross
 3. -Communion Service
- This is the day of fasting and abstinence from meat.
 - Special collection for Holy Land.

HOLY SATURDAY: EASTER VIGIL, MARCH 30 @ 8 PM

This is the most holy night of our worship. It has 4 parts:

- 1-The Service of Light with blessing of new Fire, new Easter Candle and Easter Proclamation
- 2-The Liturgy of the Word: Salvation History
- 3-The Renewal of Baptismal Promises
- 4-The Liturgy of the Eucharist.

EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 31: THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD AND EASTER JOY

The Renewal of Baptismal Promises and Baptism

EASTER FLOWERS

Easter is approaching. If you'd like to donate flowers or fund to buy flowers, please contact Colleen (403-526-4109) or mark your envelope "Easter flowers." Thanks

ST. JOHN GOSPEL, CHAPTER 17: PRIESTLY PRAYER

If you have 5 minutes, read the **chapter 17** in St. John's Gospel and look into the heart of Jesus. This chapter is called "Priestly Prayer". Jesus, the High Priest, on the first Holy Thursday evening before his Passion and Death had prayed to his Father for us.

Prayer for Priests

O Jesus, I pray for your faithful and fervent priests; for your unfaithful and lukewarm priests; for your priests laboring at home or abroad in distant mission fields; for your tempted priests; for your lonely and desolate priests; for your young priests; for your dying priests; for the souls of your priests in purgatory. But above all, I recommend to you the priests dearest to me; the priest who baptized me; the priests who absolved me from my sins; the priests who gave me your Body and Blood in Holy Communion; the priests who taught and instructed me; all the priests to whom I am indebted in any other way. O Jesus, keep them all close to your heart, and bless them abundantly in time and eternity. Amen.

IT'S TIME TO MOVE FORWARD?

We are grateful to have your financial and spiritual support. It's time for us to think about:

1. *Building a baptismal font *Expanding the hall
2. *Building a columbarium *Building a grotto
- 3.

We need your input. Please talk with Fr. Philip. Thanks





PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

Shawls have been made for centuries. They wrap, enfold, comfort, give solace, hug, shelter and beauty. Since the inception of the "Prayer Shawl Ministry" around the 1980's, the Prayer Shawl Ministry has continued to grow by leaps and bounds, extending the message of hope and love around the world ... countless volunteer knitters and crocheters now take part in this exciting new tradition of faith ... it is their work that sustains a tidal wave of caring, as they turn yarns into wraps that are interwoven with prayers. Those that receive these handmade expressions of love are buoyed by the spiritual comfort they experience while wearing their prayer shawl ... Prayer shawls are knitted or crocheted to brighten and bring comfort to the lives of those in need...

Prayer shawls become a tangible symbol of love. They can be warm hugs of happiness, empathy and support, a private place of escape to rest and relax, something to hold onto when all else seems to be slipping away. Wrapping another in a shawl knit by our own hands and our prayers for the recipient, is not only a gift for the recipient but for ourselves as well...

(above statements have been taken from a Prayer Shawl Ministry booklet)

We are starting the third year of our Prayer Shawl Ministry here at St. Patrick's and have 22 active members... all of whom are busy knitting or crocheting Prayer Shawls, lap robes, baby blankets, toques, mittens and scarves... while the items are being knitted or crocheted, the members say prayers over the article, extending good wishes and love to whomever receives them ... before they are given out they are also blessed by the priests at St. Pat's and Holy Family parishes ... These shawls and other items are meant to be given away unconditionally, and seeing as how they are blessed, they CANNOT be sold ... Thank you to the many kind people who have given a donation to the Prayer Shawl Ministry, so we can buy more wool and other supplies needed ... we extend an extra special "Thank you" to the Knights of Columbus for their more than generous donations towards our ministry ... All donations are very much appreciated ...

We have received many inspiring letter and cards from the recipients of our shawls, thanking us for the shawls and letting us know how wonderful the shawl has made them feel and what

comfort that they receive from them, this sometimes is a very tearful time for us, as we try to read as many aloud at our meetings as we can, they are kept beautifully in a binder for everyone to read and look at ...

.....Thank you from the girls at the Prayer Shawl Ministry ...

To date we have given away ... 344 Prayer Shawls to people in need, among these we have also given shawls to Good Samaritan, Sunnyside, and Masterpiece Senior/Nursing Homes. ... 104 Baby blankets to the Pregnancy Support Centre, 2 large totes of small shawls and toques to Ronald McDonald House in Calgary, ... many toques, scarves and mittens have been given to the Library Christmas Tree, St. Louis School Program, CONNECT (St. John's Presbyterian), the Tigers Teddy Bear/Toques & Mitten Toss and we have a new contact at Crestwood School.

To date we have given out 66 toques ... 15 scarves

12 headbands ... 4 neck scarves ... 14 pairs of gloves and we have some on hand again to start out next fall.

We have our meetings every second Tuesday of the month and we alternate from afternoon meeting 2 pm to evening meetings 7 pm each month to accommodate the ladies who are working. The meetings are held in the Parish Hall in the basement of St. Pat's Church. After the business part of our meeting is over, we enjoy some quality time with each other, have coffee and dainties (donated by different members), we look over the newest additions to our shawls and browse through the wool ... (new and donated) and find what we may need for our next project...

At this time we would like to thank St. Pat's for allowing us to have our meetings in the Parish Hall also for giving us a room where we can keep our shawls and wool, it is great having a place to keep all our supplies, shawls, wool etc and not having to move them constantly from place to place.

All interested knitters and crocheters are invited to attend and spend an evening with us... for more information on anything about this Prayer Shawl Ministry please feel free to call St. Pat's office 403-526-2265 or Vina @ 403-527-1002.



FR. PHILIP'S

Years ago, a priest, one of my teachers was imprisoned in a re-education camp because of his crime: being an assistant to a parish priest who was a foreigner. Every day, he labored hard along with other prisoners. The day's work had ended; the tools were being counted as usual. As the party was about to be dismissed, a guard shouted that a shovel was missing. He insisted that someone had stolen it to sell for food. Striding up and down before the men, he ranted and denounced them for their wickedness and their ingratitude to the government.

As he raved, he worked himself up into a paranoid fury. Screaming in broken words, he demanded that the guilty one step forward to take his punishment. No one moved; the guard's rage reached the heights of violence. "All die! All die!" he shrieked. To show that he meant what he said, he cocked his rifle, put it on his shoulder and looked down the sights, ready to fire at the first man at the end of the line. At that moment our priest stepped forward, stood stiffly to attention and said calmly, "I did it."

The guard unleashed all his whipped-up hate; he kicked the helpless prisoner and beat him with his fists. Still the priest stood rigidly to attention, with the blood streaming down his face. His silence goaded the guard to excess rage. Seizing his rifle by the barrel, he lifted it high over his head and, with a final howl, brought it down to the skull of the priest, who sank limply to the ground and did not move a bit. Although it was perfectly clear that he was dead, the guard continued to beat him and stopped only when he was exhausted.

The other prisoners picked up their friend's body, shouldered their tools and marched back to the camp with tears in their eyes and fear in their hearts. When the tools were counted again at the guardhouse, **no shovel was missing!**

What is the price of commitment? This is a rather delicate question that we ordinarily don't pose in such upsetting terms. What is the extent we are willing to go in order to keep our pledged word? Against a background both somber and hopeful today's readings raise and answer this question.

For Second Isaiah commitment is expressed in terms of a servant disciple. He has unequivocally heard God's summons to acknowledge the wrong of the past and embark upon the challenge of the present. This ultimately involves, however, ridicule in the form of beatings, buffets, etc. Still the servant/disciple is resolute. He is supremely confident that God will ultimately exonerate him. In the end he will witness the vindication of his commitment.

For Paul Jesus is a human being as God originally intended humanity to be: God's image. Notwithstanding his prerogatives, Jesus clings to the will of his Father and accepts the human condition. He drains himself, empties himself by embracing

suffering and frustration even to the point of crucifixion. For Paul death cannot be God's final word. Only the super-exalting of Jesus is appropriate. The title of "Lord" conferred upon Jesus is the fitting conclusion to such a life of commitment.

For Luke Jesus is the martyr *par excellent*. He adheres to his Father's plan with the utmost exactness. Despite the tremendous force of the powers of darkness he goes his appointed way. Hand in hand with his sense of martyrdom goes the statement of Jesus' absolute innocence. Pilate, Herod, the centurion, and the Good Thief are all agreed on this. The final words of the dying Jesus capture for Luke's audience the ultimate in commitment: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit."

Our palm branch is a significant symbol of our joy and victory. However, it must also become an upsetting symbol. While it speaks of victory, it clearly implies the road to victory, *viz.*, commitment. To cherish the palm is to challenge our sense of commitment.

With the election of our new Holy Father, Pope Francis, I want to invite you to experience Holy Week in the person of St. Peter. On Holy Thursday - when we celebrate the Last Supper - Peter asks Jesus, "Are you going to wash my feet?" On Good Friday we see Peter drawing a sword to defend Jesus - then denying that he even knows him but Peter should have a credit as one of the two who follow the Lord to the courtyard. On Easter Sunday morning, Simon Peter is the first Apostle to enter the empty tomb. There is no doubt about Peter's commitment to the Lord through his weakness.

Today we hear Jesus say, "*Simon, Simon, behold Satan has demanded to sift you all like wheat, but I prayed for you that your faith may not fail; and once you have turned back, you must strengthen your brothers.*" These other apostles abandoned the Lord too, why did Jesus pray only for Peter?

The words - "Strengthen your brothers" - apply to the successor of Peter too, the pope. By all accounts, God has blessed us with a humble, wise and strong man as Holy Father. But, you know, Pope Francis' strength does not come from himself, but from the promise of Jesus: "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail." The papacy has stood firm 2 thousand years because of the prayer of Jesus. Starting with Peter, the popes have weaknesses and sins (like you and me) but Jesus has preserved them from error so they can strengthen the brothers and sisters of Jesus.

We join Jesus in praying for Pope Francis. As successor of Peter, he has a vital role keeping us on the right path. Like Simon Peter, Jesus has commissioned Pope Francis: "Strengthen your brothers and sisters."