

Casting Off

Fear

and Facing Problems

**There is
a time...
and it is
now!**

*It's the
right time to...*

**Welcome new possibilities
into our life**

1st Sunday - 22 February
I set my bow in the clouds...
a sign of the covenant
between me and the earth.
(Gn. 9:13)

**Discover God
as our partner in life**

2nd Sunday- 1 March
If God is for us, who can be
against us? (Rm. 8:31b)

**Stop thinking about faith
as a collection of rules**

3rd Sunday - 8 March
Take these things out
of here, and stop making
my Father's house
a marketplace! (Jn. 2:16)

Illuminate our lives

4th Sunday- 15 March
Whoever lives the truth,
comes to the light... (Jn. 3:21)

Think of life as a gift of self

5th Sunday- 22 March
Unless a grain of wheat
falls to the ground and dies,
it remains just a single grain.
(Jn. 12:24)

**Cast off fear and face
our problems**

Palm Sunday -29 March
Jesus gave a loud cry and
breathed his last. The veil of
the sanctuary was torn in two.
(Mk. 15:37-38)

**Realize that the tomb
is empty: the Lord is alive
and goes before of us...**

Easter Sunday - 5 April
Who will roll back the stone
for us from the entrance
to the tomb? (Mk. 16:3)

Palm Sunday

Mk. 11:1-10; Is. 50:4-7; Ps. 22; Phil. 2:6-11; Mk. 14:1-15, 47

Holy Week begins a short distance from Jerusalem—in the little town of Bethany, where Jesus had experienced friendship and deep emotion, where he had wept over the death of Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary. It was there that he had given the order: "Take away the stone" (Jn. 11:39) and then cried aloud: "Lazarus, come out!" (Jn. 11:43), followed by the command: "Unbind him and let him go" (Jn. 11:44).

As Jesus and his companions were approaching Bethphage, a hamlet in the shadow of the Holy City, close to the Mount of Olives, Jesus said to two of his disciples: "Go into the village ahead of you and you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here" (Mk. 11:2). He did not ask for a horse—an animal used in war and also by the rich and the powerful; the animal St. Paul is reputed to have fallen from. Instead, he asked for a donkey—a despised animal used by the prophets. The donkey belongs to the class of animals mentioned first in the Book of Genesis. It was a donkey, tradition tells us, that kept the newborn Jesus company after his birth. Now it is a donkey that will bear him—the Son of David—into Jerusalem, where he will be betrayed, unjustly condemned, tortured and crucified. From the cross, Jesus will once more cry out (Mk. 15:37). Afterward, he will be buried outside the city, with a rock to cover the entrance to his tomb.

Thus Holy Week begins. During this time, let us strive to deepen our friendship with Jesus. Together with him, let us feel compassion; let us weep. Together with him, let us cry aloud when the moment comes to remove the stones, the wrappings and the chains that bind the people of this world. Together with him, let us choose to use poor means to mingle with them, sharing their toils, allowing ourselves to be liberated from the fear of death, surmounting the divisions of different Faiths. When Jesus died, "the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom" (Mk. 15:38). Every division between God and human beings was bridged; every distance abolished, every fear dissolved, every type of death conquered. But a lot of ground still lies ahead of us on the road leading to the rediscovery of hope....

Fr. Luca Pandolfi

Prayer

Lord, break our chains, free our hearts from fear,
take away the stone that we ourselves or others
have rolled in front of our hope.

**Cry aloud to us; command us to come out.
Send someone to free us so that
we can walk with you among the people.**

**And when our dreams shatter
and our projects collapse,
when our betrayals and those of others
rob us of life and hope,
please listen to our cry and
show us a new path:
the one that leads to life.**