



## Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

***Building together a culture of vocation for all the baptised***

### Opening Prayer



Loving and gracious God,

As your baptised sons and daughters, you have called us to a vocation of holiness. Let us hear your call, and fill our hearts with Divine love so that all in the community of the Church in Broken Bay may clearly understand and live out their Christian vocations, responding to the needs of your people.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

### Introduction



“God’s call is charged with a task. The person is called to do something, to lead, to guide, to teach, to go on a mission (e.g. Abraham, Gen 12:1-9; Mary Magdalen, John 20:17). However, they are never sent alone. God promises to be with them (e.g. David, 1Sam 16:13). God pledges fidelity, and the one called is often surprised that with God, all things are possible.” (Bishop Anthony’s Pastoral Letter, *Jesus Christ, our beginning and end*)

In our final gathering together, we reflect on the Passion of Jesus, and His steadfastness in carrying out His mission to the end. He was firm in His conviction to finish that which He was called to, even when faced with the immensity of what was before Him. Each of us is also called to discern and embrace our own vocation, wherever God will lead us, knowing with confidence that the Holy Spirit accompanies us each step of the way.

### Gospel Reading



**Audio:**  
**Week 6 Gospel Reading**



### Mark 15:16-39 (Excerpt)

Then the soldiers led Jesus into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of

a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days; save yourself, and come down from the cross!" In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe."

Those who were crucified with him also taunted him. When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah." And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down." Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the

centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

### Pause for reflection.

You are invited to share a thought, feeling or insight that is arising in you as you hear this Gospel text today. Simply listen to each person, with no comment at this stage.

### Reflection – Deacon Samuel French

Deacon in the Diocese of Broken Bay  
Holy Name Parish, Wahroonga



This week on Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord we hear Mark's powerful account of the passion and death of Jesus. In this account, Our Lord is stood before Pilate, delivered up to be scourged and then crucified. The passion of Christ serves as a powerful symbol of the Christian vocation. Whether God has called you to marriage, religious life, single life, or the ordained life, he asks all to: "deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Mk 8:34).

A vocation is not, however, a matter of suffering for suffering's sake. Rather, Jesus calls us to follow him into his suffering and death so that we may emerge with him into the new life of his resurrection. Just as Jesus, in a supreme act of love, shouldered the cross to complete his salvific work on earth, so too must we accept the weight of our vocation to fulfill our earthly mission and receive

our eternal reward. It is important to remember that suffering has no value on its own, but when accepted willingly as part of our vocation, it serves as a necessary and powerful path to holiness and, ultimately, love.

Bishop Anthony, in his recent pastoral letter *Jesus Christ, our beginning and end* encourages us to work together to build a culture of vocation for all the baptised. Beyond a mere “process of belonging” or “club membership,” our bishop reminds us that “the goal of baptism is eternal life, and that through baptism we participate in the death and resurrection of Jesus.” As faithful Catholics, we cannot accept in baptism the joy of eternal life without acknowledging the pain and sacrifice that made it possible. To live as such would be a denial of the true nature of our baptism. An authentic understanding of our baptism helps us to live our authentic vocation.

The bishop reminds us in his letter that, as baptised Christians, “our first vocation is holiness.” It is natural, however, that every member of the baptised will express ‘holiness’ in different ways – each according to their gifts and state of life. One thing is certain, however, a growth in holiness will always mean a growth in love. Jesus teaches perfect holiness when he says: “love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12). The way that Jesus has loved us is on full display in this Sunday’s account of his passion. The quality of his love is free and self-sacrificial. Jesus freely gave his life over to the Father, saying: “not what

I will, but what you will” (Mk 14:36). His love is also self-sacrificial because he willingly underwent the pain of the cross not to save himself, but to save us. Therefore, the love of Jesus in his passion exemplifies for us the deepest meaning of vocation – a free and self-sacrificial response to the will of the Father.

Responding to such a call is never easy. Jesus himself underwent the agony in the garden in preparation for his passion, exclaiming to his disciples that “my soul is sorrowful even unto death” (Mk 14:34) and even asking the Father: “remove this cup from me” (Mk 14:36). Bishop Anthony notes that when we are called to a particular vocation – marriage, religious, single, or Holy Orders – there is often a similar time spent “grappling with God’s call.” In such moments, we feel the tension between the will of God and our own. Like Jesus, we must reach out to the Father, imploring God’s help to give us the freedom to take on the sacrifices He is asking of us. This can be like a mini-passion – a death to self – preparing us for a lifetime of self-sacrificial service to the Church, our spouse and family, or particular mission.

The connection between Christ’s passion and our vocation should not scare us. The suffering to which we may be called is never experienced alone and is never more than we can bear. Jesus always walks with us and gives us the strength we need. Like Christ’s own passion, the pain we experience in response to God’s call

is never for nothing. It purifies us; it makes us holy; it demonstrates our love for God and neighbour; it leads to our fulfillment in this life and the everlasting joys of the next.

### Reflection Questions for Discussion:



1. Share and discuss your insights from listening to the Gospel text and the accompanying reflection.
2. Our Christian vocation arises from our Baptism. How would you describe your vocation?
3. Have there been instances where it has been difficult for you to live this vocation? How have you persevered?
4. In what ways is your vocation a 'self-sacrificial response to the will of the Father'?

### A Personal Story



#### Audio:

Week 6 Personal Story –  
Shayne D’Cunha



*Shayne offers us a personal reflection on his own vocational call.*

*Shayne D’Cunha is a seminarian being formed in the Discipleship Stage for the priesthood. His home Parish is St Agatha’s, Pennant Hills. Throughout 2020, Shayne had pastoral placements at Holy Name Parish, Wahroonga and St John Fisher & St Cecilia’s Parish, Wyong. He loves talking about God, the Holy Catholic Church and vocation!*

### Listen to the testimony, and use the following questions to discuss:



1. What aspects of ‘vocation’ in Shayne’s life spoke to you most deeply?
2. How is this story inspiring you to more intentionally live out your own vocation?
3. How could your parish / school / agency / community give a greater focus to Bishop’s priority of Christian vocation of all the baptised so that each person’s gifts are utilised?

