



The Catholic Cathedral of
The Immaculate Conception
PARISH BULLETIN & NEWSLETTER



April 2019 (Year C) Vol. XVII No. 4

Holy Thursday, the Miracle of God's Generosity

by Fr. Gregoire Vignola

On April 18, the Church will celebrate Holy Thursday, remembering the Lord's Last Supper with His disciples. On that occasion, Jesus gave us a marvellous sign of His continuous presence among us: the institution of the Eucharist, which is in itself the miracle of God's generosity. So each time we take part in the Eucharist, we benefit once again of God's great generosity, giving us His Son to become our Saviour, not because we are worthy of it, but because He loves us and forgives us.

On that night, when Jesus was about to return to His Heavenly Father, He said to His disciples: "I am with you always, even to the end of this world"; then He instituted the Eucharist, the sacrament of His permanent presence in our midst. Do we really realize how marvellous was the gift given to us on that evening? A gift generously repeated and handed down to us each time we participate in the Eucharist. But a gift has to be received and accepted in order to produce its effect. If the gesture of the giver is, whether consciously or not, turned down, the gift automatically loses its miraculous effect. On that night, the gift of Jesus was refused by Judas Iscariot, and we know where it led him.

The reality present here is that God so loves us that He will never force us to accept His gift. Patiently He will wait until we show a sign of acceptance and participation, which will make possible the intended miracle. In other words, no miracle will occur without an expression of faith from our part, without our generous and full collaboration. This is the reason why, each time when in the Gospel a miracle is requested from Jesus, He always asks the person in front of Him to show his faith.

In order to make us more aware of our own responsibility in the manifestation of any miracle, I invite us now to pay attention to the narrative of two miracles, one in the Old Testament (2 Kings 4, 42-44), and the other in the New Testament (John 6, 1-15), two miracles which beautifully prefigure the miracle of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper.

The miracle described in the Second Book of the Kings shows God's concern for His people during a time of famine. The bread mentioned here was the bread of the first-fruits, which was meant to be offered to God. But, instead of offering it to God, Elisha, the prophet of the Old Covenant, gave it to the people who are facing famine. The left-overs only stress God's generosity.

Like Elisha, Jesus, the prophet of the New Covenant, through that miracle feeds hungry people, and does it even more astonishingly. Here is a clear Eucharistic reference in the way the miracle is related: Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them to the people. Such language is meant to remind us of what Jesus did at the Last Supper, and of what happens every time we celebrate the Eucharist.

(continued on Pg. 2)

Even though both feedings are miraculous, there is an essential human element in each, without which no miracle would have been possible. So the first message is very strong: no miracle of God is possible without men's generous and full collaboration. In both texts, we see God's concern for the hungry, but in both cases the hunger will not be relieved without human participation, and also without the overcoming of stubborn human suspicion.

In the text of Kings, the prophet Elisha clearly rejects the objection of his servant, who just brought him twenty barley loaves, saying to him: "How can I set this before a hundred people? Then Elisha cut through the red tape and insisted that the bread should be given to the people, even though the bread was that of the first-fruits, which was marked out for offering to God. We see exactly the same happening in the text of the Gospel. First of all, there was that marvellous generosity of the boy, who did not hesitate to offer the five loaves and the two fish he had. Then, once again, there was that objection of one of Jesus' disciples saying: "But what good are these to so many?" And at the end, from that small and humble offering of a little boy, there was the astonishing generosity of Jesus: not only did He feed all the people, but He saw to it that each got as much as he wanted, and even so there were twelve full baskets of left-overs.

So once again, the message is very clear: without that determination of the prophet Elisha to share with the people the little he received, without the naivety of that boy to offer all he had, even though it was little, without both of their generosity, no miracle would have been possible. Let us ask ourselves now: where is that determination, that naivety, that generosity among us which will make possible God's miracles in our midst, to renew our community, to give new life to our community? Without our participation and contribution, there will be no miracle among us.

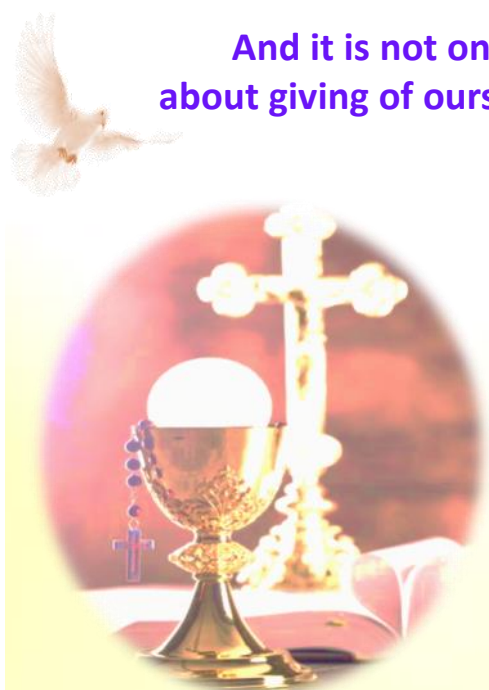
Opposing such a positive attitude, we will always hear the same objections: what is the meaning of putting me, a small potato, before so many people? Of which use will be my limited capacities in front of more talented people? What can I share? I even do not have enough for myself? Let us make it clear that, in the eyes of God, there is not a single contribution (even the smallest one), no participation which is useless. Even from a little, when offered with generosity, God can make a miracle.

Generosity should always have a central place in the life of every Christian, and generosity is always a very important contribution in the building-up of a Christian community. And we get so many opportunities in our everyday dealings with one another to practise it.

And it is not only about giving things, but also, and more especially, about giving of ourselves, of our time, our energy and our love and concern.

And obviously we will discover that joy, inner joy, is one of the lovely fruits of generosity. We will rarely meet a generous person who is sad and unhappy. A generous community, a community where there are many acts of generosity, will always be a joyful community.

Obviously it was the intention of Jesus to make of us a generous community, when at the **Last Supper** He invited His disciples to imitate His own generosity.





Liturgy of the Word

Scripture Readings for April 2019 (Year C)

Fifth Sunday of Lent — 7 April 2019

First Reading (Is 43:16-21). The prophet assures the Jews exiled in Babylon that there will be a new Exodus. This message of hope should inspire us also.

Second Reading (Phil 3:8-14). Paul has willingly sacrificed everything for the privilege of knowing Christ. He hasn't yet arrived but is still running the race of salvation.

Gospel (Jn 8:1-11). Jesus refuses to condemn a woman caught in adultery.

Passion (Palm) Sunday — 14 April 2019

First Reading (Is 50:4-7). The prophet suffers in carrying out his mission, but is confident that God will vindicate him.

Second Reading (Phil 2:6-11). Because Jesus took on himself our human condition and accepted death on a cross, the Father has made him Lord of heaven and earth.

Gospel (Lk 22:14-23:56). Luke's version of the Passion Story. As in the rest of his Gospel, so in his account of the Passion, Luke presents a Christ who is merciful and forgiving, even to his executioners.

Holy Thursday — 18 April 2019

First Reading (Ex 12:1-8, 11-14). The people of Israel are reminded that the angel passed over them when he brought death to the first-born of the Egyptians.

Second Reading (1 Cor 11:23-26). The Eucharist is described as a 'remembrance' of Christ's death.

Gospel (Jn 13:1-15). Jesus washes the feet of his disciples as an example of the loving service that he expects us to give one another.

Good Friday — 19 April 2019

First Reading (Is 52:13-53:12). The suffering and death of the servant-prophet of Yahweh brings about the purification of many nations.

Second Reading (Heb 4:14-14, 5:7-9). Jesus learns to obey through suffering, and becomes for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation.

Passion (Jn 18:1-19:42). We are invited to recognize the exaltation of the cross.

Easter Vigil — 20 April 2019

First Reading (Gen 1:1-2:2). In the story of creation. 'God saw all he had made, indeed it was very good'.

Second Reading (Gen 22:1-18). Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his own son reminds us that God was prepared to sacrifice his Son, Jesus, for our sakes.

Third Reading (Ex 14:15-15:1). We hear the story of the miraculous deliverance of the people of Israel from their enemies at the Red Sea.

Fourth Reading (Is 54:5-14). We celebrate God's compassionate love for his sinful people.

Fifth Reading (Is 55:1-11). God invites us to join in the banquet he has prepared for his covenant people in the kingdom of heaven.

Sixth Reading (Bar 3:9-15, 32:4-4). We hear an invitation to leave behind the captivity of sin and to accept the freedom which God offers to us.

Seventh Reading (Ezek 36:16-28). The return of the exiles from Babylon is described as something which demands purification and a new spirit.

Epistle (Rom 6:3-11). In baptism, we have died with Christ to a life of sin and risen with him to new life.

Gospel (Mt 28:1-10). The crucified Jesus rose from the dead to a new and immortal life.

Easter Sunday — 21 April 2019

First Reading (Acts 10:34-37-43). This is part of an early sermon preached by St Peter in which he proclaims the risen Jesus to be the Saviour of those who believe in him, and Judge of the living and the dead.

Second Reading (Col 3:1-4). Through our Baptism we already share in the risen life of Christ, though in a hidden and mysterious way.

Gospel (Jn 20:1-9). On their finding Jesus' tomb empty, the truth of his resurrection begins to dawn on his disciples.

Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday) — 28 April 2019

First Reading (Acts 5:12-16). This tells of the high regard in which the apostles were held by ordinary people, and of the cures they worked for the sick.

Second Reading (Rev 1:9-13.17-19). John is bidden to write a message—one which has meaning for the Church until the end of time.

Gospel (Jn 20:19-31). By seeing and touching the wounds of his risen Lord, Thomas the doubter is cured of his unbelief.

Liturgy - Relevant Websites:

For devotion to Divine Mercy — Divine Mercy (www.divinemercy.org)

For on-screen prayer guidance & everyday scripture readings — Sacred Space (www.sacredspace.ie)

For Parish info, visit the Cathedral web (www.cathedral.catholic.org.hk) call: (852) 2522-8212 fax: (852) 2521-7957 email: cathedral@catholic.org.hk

Meditation



THE SEVEN WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS *

Christ Jesus died on the Cross to redeem mankind, to save us from our sins because of his love for us. As recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in the Holy Bible, Jesus Christ was mocked, scorned, and tortured in the praetorium. He carried his cross up the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem to Calvary, was nailed to the Cross, and hung between two common criminals. He suffered an indescribable end, recalled by the Church on Good Friday of Holy week.

One may meditate on the Passion of Christ by reflecting on his Seven Words on the Cross or by a devotion known as The Way of the Cross. ... Here are his Seven Words, the last seven expressions of Jesus Christ on the Cross recorded in Scripture.

THE FIRST WORD: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." Luke 23:34

Jesus of Nazareth is looking down from the cross just after he was crucified between two criminals. He sees the soldiers who have mocked, scourged, and tortured him, and who have just nailed him to the cross. He probably remembers those who have sentenced him - Caiaphas and the high priests of the Sanhedrin. Pilate realized it was out of envy that they handed him over (Matthew 27:18, Mark 15:10). But is Jesus not also thinking of his Apostles and companions who have deserted him, of Peter who has denied him three times, of the fickle crowd who only days before praised him on his entrance to Jerusalem, and then days later demanded his crucifixion?

Is he also thinking of us, who daily forget him in our lives?

Does he react angrily? No! At the height of his physical suffering, his love prevails and He asks His Father to forgive! Could there ever be greater irony? Jesus asks his Father to forgive, but it is by His very Sacrifice on the Cross that mankind is able to be forgiven! ...

THE SECOND WORD: "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." Luke 23:43

Now it is not just the religious leaders or the soldiers that mock Jesus, but even one of the criminals, a downward progression of mockery. But the criminal on the right speaks up for Jesus, explaining the two criminals are receiving their just due, whereas "this man has done nothing wrong." Then, turning to Jesus, he asks, "Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). What wonderful faith this repentant sinner has in Jesus - far more than the doubting Thomas, one of his own Apostles. Ignoring his own suffering, Jesus responds with mercy in His second word, living out his own Beatitude, "*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.*" ...

This expression offers us hope for salvation, for if we turn our hearts and prayers to Him and accept his forgiveness, we will also be with Jesus Christ at the end of our lives.

THE THIRD WORD: "Jesus said to his mother: "Woman, this is your son." Then he said to the disciple: "This is your mother." John 19:26-27

Jesus and Mary are together again, at the beginning of his ministry in Cana and now at the end of his public ministry at the foot of the Cross. John is the only Evangelist to record Our Lord's mother Mary at the Cross. The Lord refers to his mother as *woman* at the Wedding Feast of Cana (John 2:1-11) and in this passage, recalling the *woman* in Genesis 3:15, the first Messianic prophecy of the Redeemer, anticipating the woman clothed with the sun in Revelation 12.

What sorrow must fill Mary's heart! How she must have felt meeting her Son as he carried the Cross on the Via Dolorosa... And then she had to watch him being nailed to the Cross. Once again, a sword pierces Mary's soul: we are reminded of the prophecy of Simeon at the Presentation of the infant Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:35)...

Jesus again rises above the occasion as he cares for the ones that love him. The good son that He is, Jesus is concerned about looking after his mother...In fact, this passage indicates that Jesus was the only child of Mary, because if he did have natural brothers or sisters, they would have provided for her. But Jesus looks to John to care for her....

THE FOURTH WORD: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34

This was the only expression of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. Both Gospels related that it was in the ninth hour, after 3 hours of darkness, that Jesus cried out this fourth word. The ninth hour was three o'clock in Judea. After the fourth Word, Mark related with a horrible sense of finality, "And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last" (Mark 15:37). One is struck by the anguished tone of this expression in contrast to the first three words of Jesus. He feels separated from his Father. This cry is from the painful heart of the human Jesus who must feel deserted by His Father and the Holy Spirit, not to mention his earthly companions the disciples, who "all left him and fled" (Matthew 26:56, Mark 14:50). As if to emphasize his loneliness, Mark (15:40) even has his loved ones "looking on from afar." Jesus is now all alone, and he must face death by himself....

But does this not have to happen? Does this not have to occur if Jesus is to save us? It is in defeat of his humanity that the Divine plan of His Father will be completed. It is by His death that we are redeemed. "For there is one God. There is also one mediator between God and the human race, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as ransom for all" (I Timothy 2:5-6).

"He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed." First Peter 2:24

THE FIFTH WORD: "I thirst." John 19:28

The fifth word of Jesus is His only human expression of His physical suffering. Jesus is now in shock. The wounds inflicted upon him in the scourging, the crowning with thorns, losing blood on the three-hour walk through the city of Jerusalem on the Via Dolorosa to Golgotha, and the nailing upon the cross are now taking their toll...

Jesus also thirsts in a spiritual sense. He thirsts for love. He thirsts for the love of his Father, who has left him unaided during this dreadful hour when He must fulfill his mission all alone. And he thirsts for the love and salvation of his people, the human race. Jesus practiced what he preached:

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." John 15:12-13

THE SIXTH WORD: "It is finished." John 19:30

...The soldiers offered wine on a sprig of hyssop to the Lord. Hyssop is a small plant that was used to sprinkle the blood of the Passover Lamb on the doorposts of the Hebrews (Exodus 12:22). John's Gospel related that it was the Day of Preparation, the day *before* the actual Sabbath Passover, that Jesus was sentenced to death (19:14) and sacrificed on the Cross (19:31)...He died at the ninth hour (three o'clock in the afternoon), about the same time as the Passover lambs were slaughtered in the Temple. Christ became the Paschal or Passover Lamb, as noted by St. Paul: *"For Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed"* (First Corinthians 5:7). The innocent Lamb was slain for our sins, so that we might be forgiven. It is now a fait accompli. The sixth word is Jesus' recognition that his suffering is over and his task is completed. Jesus is obedient to the Father and gives his love for mankind by redeeming us with His death on the Cross...

When Jesus died, He "handed over" the Spirit. Jesus remained in control to the end, and it is He who handed over his Spirit. One should not miss the double entendre here, for this may also be interpreted as His death brought forth the Holy Spirit.

THE SEVENTH WORD: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." Luke 23:46

The seventh word of Jesus is from the Gospel of Luke, and is directed to the Father in heaven, just before He dies. Jesus recalls Psalms 31:5 - "Into thy hands I commend my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God." Luke repeatedly pleads Jesus' innocence: with Pilate (Luke 23:4, 14-15, 22), through Dismas the criminal (by leg-end) (Luke 23:41), and immediately after His death with the centurion - "Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, "Certainly this man was innocent" (Luke 23:47).

Jesus was obedient to His Father to the end, and his final word before his death on the Cross was a prayer to His Father....

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, So that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16

(*Excerpt only—for full article, please refer to <https://www.jesuschristsavior.net/Words.html>)

Activities and Events

MONTHLY EVENT on April 7, 2019

Invitation to SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE GATHERING

For whom: for all members of the English-speaking Community;

When: following the 9:30 a.m. Mass of each first Sunday of the Month;

Where: in the Cathedral Parish Hall;

Purpose: to foster friendship and sense of belonging.



CALLING FOR YOUTHS AT THE CATHEDRAL!

Join in the fun & fellowship with **KEY!** Explore the young faith by walking through a supportive path with our youth leaders, and discover how we link our faith into our everyday lives. Anyone between the age of 12 and 18 is more than welcome to join.

Feel free to contact Fr. Greg or Ashley through email if you have inquiries. ashleyhox@gmail.com



Above and right : Father Gregoire Vignola with our English Sunday School families at a special Saturday afternoon Lenten Mass and Stations of the Cross for Children.



Important Reminder : Final Lenten Almsgiving from our ESS students and other young parishioners will be collected on Easter Sunday (21 April) at 9:30 a.m. Mass. Parents are requested to help their children empty their purple Paschal Lambs in advance and prepare individual Gift envelopes. The Paschal Lambs are for students' safe keeping and to be re-used in future years. The Gift envelopes may be deposited into designated Lenten Alms Baskets in front of the Main Altar when children approach for Easter Blessing by the priests.

ENGLISH SUNDAY SCHOOL ENROLMENT (2019-20)

The new ESS Handbook, Calendar and Application Form for the next school year are all available for downloading from the Cathedral website - <http://cathedral.catholic.org.hk> under "English Section – Sunday School". Please note that places are limited, and applications will be considered strictly on a first-come first-served basis. Completed Forms should be returned to Father Greg at the Parish Office.

Application Form Submission Deadlines:-

12 April (Friday)

for Returning Students

before 5:00pm

31 May (Friday)

for New Applicants

before 5:00pm



DIOCESAN ENGLISH YOUTH (DEY)



hkdeyouth |



hkdeyouth |



hkdeyouth@gmail.com

DEY'S MONTHLY ADORATION

Every first Tuesday evening of the month, DEY holds a Eucharistic Adoration from 8pm to 10pm, at Wan Chai's Our Lady Mount of Carmel. Doors are open to the public and everyone is free to come and go as they like, throughout the evening.

HELP NEEDED: Are you interested in helping our Adoration team? It's a small, but fruitful team, who volunteer to maintain the monthly Adoration every month. We are looking for people who could contribute by helping to set up and tidy up, as well as **musicians** and **singers** who are interested to take part of the music team. If you're interested to help out, please contact DEY!

BLOOD DONATION CAMPAIGN Registration Forms in English are available on the bookshelves. **Completed Forms should be returned on or before 12 May 2019:**

- a) By hand to the Parish Ambassador at Sunday Mass
- b) By e-mail to cathedral.blood.drive@gmail.com or
- c) By Fax to 28683681

For full details of Eligibility, please refer to the website of Hong Kong Red Cross -

<http://www5.ha.org.hk/rcbts/hkindex.asp>

- 1) Should be enjoying good health, weighing above 41 Kg (90 lbs) and between 18 – 66 years
- 2) Not be a carrier of Hepatitis Viruses
- 3) Have not spent 3 months or more cumulatively in the UK between 1980 to 1996
- 4) Have not spent 5 years or more cumulatively in Europe countries from 1980 to present
- 5) Interval between 2 consecutive blood donations:
For gentlemen : no fewer than 75 days (75 days before 19 May is 4 March 2019)
For ladies: no fewer than 105 days (105 days before 19 May is 2 Feb 2019)
- 6) Travel history:
 - a) After travelling to Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam etc. (areas affected by Zika Virus), allow an interval of 28 days from the date of departure from the above areas
 - b) After travelling to N. America (affected by West Nile Virus), allow an interval of 28 days
 - c) After travelling to Malaria affected areas, allow an interval of 12 months



2019 ADORATION

EVERY FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

8:00 PM – 10:00 PM (OPEN DOOR)
OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH
1 STAR STREET, WAN CHAI

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION AVAILABLE.

STOP PRESS ...

捐血救人 與主同行
BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO GIVE BLOOD



捐血日期 / Blood Donation Date

19.5.2019

時間 / Time: 9:15 am - 3:00 pm

地點: 明愛大廈五樓公眾會堂

Venue: Community Hall, 5/F, Caritas House

Enquiry: cathedral.blood.drive@gmail.com



天主教聖母無原罪主教座堂
Cathedral of Immaculate Conception



Praying for the Pope's Monthly Intention (April 2019)



Doctors and their Collaborators in War Zones

For doctors and their humanitarian collaborators in war zones, who risk their lives to save the lives of others.

Reflections

EASTER SUNDAY — A quiet Joy and Peace

On Easter Day we still feel pain, our own pain and the pain of others.

But a new element has been introduced.

It doesn't remove the pain,
but gives it a meaning, and lights it up with hope.

All is different because Jesus is alive and
speaks his words of peace to us.

Therefore, there is a quiet joy among us,
and a deep sense of peace.

Jesus has broken the power of death,
and given us the hope of eternal life.

Lord, guard this hope with your grace,
and bring it to fulfilment in the kingdom of heaven.

Alleluia!

He is risen



DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

The message of The Divine Mercy is simple.

It is that God loves us — all of us. And, he wants us to recognize that His mercy is greater than our sins, so that we will call upon Him with trust, receive His mercy, and let it flow through us to others. Thus, all will come to share His joy.

- A-** Ask for His mercy. God wants us to approach Him in prayer constantly, repenting of our sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon us and upon the whole world.
- B-** Be merciful . God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. He wants us to extend love and forgiveness to others just as He does to us.
- C-** Completely trust in Jesus. God wants us to know that the graces of His mercy are dependent upon our trust. The more we trust in Jesus, the more we will receive.

Have a blessed
Easter

Celebrate
the Resurrection of our Lord