



Dear Friends,

I wish each of you a blessed and prayerful Holy Week in preparation for the gift of Easter! As always, your priests and staff are excited about all of the important celebrations that make up Holy Week at Holy Cross.

This coming Sunday is Palm Sunday. We begin our Masses inside the front doors of the Church with the Blessing of the Palms. Weather permitting, the Blessing of the Palms and procession for the 10:30 AM Mass will begin outside the Church near the School. The Passion of Christ will be proclaimed by our lectors and clergy to remind us of the fullness of the Lord's love and how He challenges us to walk the Way of the Cross with Jesus during these holy days.

I encourage every parishioner who desires to take another step in their spiritual journey to receive the Sacrament of Penance. Confessions will be heard on March 27<sup>th</sup> (the Saturday before Palm Sunday) after morning Mass from 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM and on Wednesday evening March 31<sup>st</sup> from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM. This is one of the greatest gifts you can give to yourself and to the Lord just before Easter.

On Holy Thursday, the feast of the gift of the Eucharist, we will have a 9:00 AM Mass for those unable to attend the evening service. The 7:30 PM liturgy includes the Washing of the Feet and ends with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on the side altar. The Church will remain open until 11:00 PM for Adoration. We have two services on Good Friday: the Stations of the Cross at 3:00 PM, and the Celebration of the Lord's Passion at 7:30 PM. On this day, we can truly empathize with the suffering of Jesus. Please make an effort to spend some quality time with Him.

The Easter Vigil liturgy begins at 8:00 PM on Saturday. We will welcome 5 new members to Holy Cross Church: 2 Elect, who will be baptized, and 3 Candidates, already one with us through baptism, who will enter into Full Communion with the Church. While the Easter Vigil is longer than an ordinary Sunday Mass, it is a beautiful celebration of darkness, fire, and light; water and oil; and Scripture and the Eucharist. For Catholics, the Easter Vigil is the ultimate celebration of the liturgical year. Immediately after the Mass, please join us in Lewis Hall for a short reception to welcome our new members.

Finally, I ask for your assistance. Just a little over a month ago, the Washington area was deluged with the "Blizzard of 2010". Church attendance was considerably smaller during those weekends. If you add the snowstorm in mid-December, we had three major "hits" to our Offertory collection in a span of two months. Snow removal this year cost \$15,690 which far exceeded our budget. I hope those of you who missed one, two, or three Sundays because of the weather will consider adding what you would normally give in a regular Sunday Offertory collection to your Easter gift. This would greatly assist our overly-strained budget resulting from the decline in collections and excessive snow removal costs incurred due to this unusual winter weather. I am hoping for our biggest Easter collection ever and continue to be grateful for your generosity.

Fr. Joseph Perkins, Fr. Jean Prosper Yaga, Deacon Bob Hubbard, and our entire staff join me in extending to you our best wishes for a prayerful Holy Week and the joy of a blessed Easter season from Easter Sunday through Pentecost. On a personal note, I want you to know how sincerely grateful I am for your concern and prayers for me over these last weeks. I appreciate all of your thoughtfulness as I continue to recover. I continue to keep all of you in my prayers.

Happy Easter!  
Msgr. R. Cary Hill