

***“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”***

*(John 15:13)*

**A**t this time in our faith life we are being told by science and the government authorities that we are to stay at home, locked down, in social distance, isolation, for an indefinite period of time, not only to save our lives but also to save the life of others.

**A**s we do this we see our lives being disrupted beyond belief. The ways we move, eat, love, sleep, die, and perform our daily living are transformed and permanently changed; our “old ways” are dying to give birth to a new chance of life for others. We are being called in a very peculiar way to “lay down our lives” (in the ordinary form we know) for others: for people who we don’t know and will probably never know, for people we love, for people we dislike, for people who are our enemies...

**A**ll of us at Holy Faith and all Christian people have the opportunity to see the greatest witness of this mandate in the person of Jesus Christ, who gave up his life so we may live: Jesus, our Lord and Savior, our Teacher, our Guide, our Inspiration, the center of our faith and life!

**W**hen we enter into the mysteries of Holy Week through the doors of Jerusalem, with Palms and songs of praise and glory to our King, we remember that our most important task during this time is to keep people alive, and protect the precious gift of life, even at the cost of our physical freedom and our comfort. We are being asked to die little by little, but like Jesus, we are being called to rise again because we know Jesus conquered death! The Paschal Mystery! This Paschal Mystery is at the heart and foundation of our Catholic Faith and our Sacred Liturgy.

**A**s a church community, the Body of Christ, we are also “laying down” our liturgical life as we know and desire it, and, although not by choice, we are being challenged to enter more profoundly into the heart and soul of these festivities; into what really matters: *“love one another as I have loved you”*(John 15:12).

**A**t Holy Faith, practicing and promoting this new dimension of sacrificial love, is taking precedent during these Holy and Sacred Days. We do not want to give our brothers and sisters any reason to leave their homes for anything other than an immediate situation to sustain life: like seeking food and/or for medical attention. We believe that enduring in love and sacrifice the pain of our profound urge and holy desire to be with each other, to celebrate these sacred mysteries in unity, and not being able to do so, is a profound manifestation of walking the way of the cross in faith, dying with Christ while still having the certainty of the Resurrection.

**F**or these reasons, we will not be distributing palms during this Palm Sunday or making them available to the community. Also, to continue living and promoting the mandate to “love one another”, we will not live stream any service during Palm Sunday. This is to protect the lives and health of our staff and volunteers, their families, and anyone whom they may come in contact with, as well as the inside of our church surfaces and environment.

**W**e will be evaluating how things evolve after Palm Sunday and will keep you posted on how we will be proceeding with the celebrations of the Sacred Triduum as we keep a commitment to keep our priorities in focus: *“Love one another...”*

## HOW TO CELEBRATE PALM SUNDAY AT HOME

### "The Domestic Church"

1. If possible, get a Palm branch from your home, say a [\*prayer of blessing\*](#), and place the palm in a prominent place in your house as a reminder of this Holy day. If you wish, you can decorate the palm before or after the prayer.
2. We also encourage you to make some time to read the Passion of the Lord according to Matthew ([Matthew 26:14-27:66](#)). If you have at least three people in your household, each person can take a part: Narrator, Jesus, all Voices.
3. Read and reflect on Fr. Emmanuel's homily for Palm Sunday and pray the [Prayers of the Faithful](#) which unites all of us in the universal prayer of the Church.