

## **Palm Sunday - COURAGE**

Jesus' life reaches its climax in the act of total surrender at the foot of the cross. But this is not the surrender of a defeated King, but an act of courageous love that is at the heart of the victory of Christ over all that evil is capable of.

Palm cross – sign of his victory

Victory over the voices that attempt to prevent Jesus taking up his cross

Victory over the fears that were racing through the very core of his being.

Yet Jesus faced those fears, heard those voices and overcame – not by might, not even power, but by God's Spirit – the Spirit of surrender

This was the inspiration for apostle Paul when he wrote to Christians who themselves were in danger of falling (Philippians 2: 5-11)

The courage to surrender is to characterise Christians – to surrender the self to God. The life of Jesus Christ inspires us to live courageously, courageously surrendering everything to God.

Lent – 4 ways of living the life of Christ in all we do (Values). ... The Lived-ousness of the One who lives in us (we see these writ large in Holy Week)

**Hands** – expression of each

**Prayerfulness** – Praying hands– Gethsemane- pouring out soul. Expressing fears (sweat like drops of blood), yet absolute surrender to God, and praying for courage to do God's will, whatever the cost

**Openness** – open hands – open to the crowd, open to his enemies, hearing all the voices yet open to receiving the Spirit of the Lord and the strength of his might and so receiving that divine courage flooding his body mind and spirit

**Graciousness** – hands he opened so that Roman soldiers could drive through them the sharpened iron - hands that flung stars into space to cruel nails surrendered - Yet in that moment Christ released such grace – Father forgive

**Thankfulness** – hands opened in praise and thanksgiving to the God who was opening the way to heaven for all who would take Christ's hand and go through their own death – a dying to the old self, the me at the centre self, and allow Christ to take them by the hand and lead them home.

**We place these hands at the foot of the cross and offer ourselves to God in silence**

*Prayer:*

*Father, hear the prayer we offer,  
Not for ease that prayer shall be,  
but for strength that we may ever  
live our lives courageously.*

Questions:

- 1) Recall a time when you have shown real courage. What was the motivation for that action, and what factors were significant in helping you to be courageous?
- 2) What did you find most striking about the dramatic reconstruction of Christ's walk to the cross? Which do you think might have been most challenging for Jesus to hear?
- 3) If you have a palm cross, hold it as you remember the words of the prayer:  
*God our Saviour, whose Son Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as Messiah to suffer and to die, let these palms be for us signs of his victory; and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.*  
*Amen.*  
What might living out this prayer look like in your everyday life?
- 4) Which of the 4 values we have been considering during Lent requires most courage for you to put into practice? Describe some of the reasons behind this.
- 5) How could we en-courage one another in the weeks ahead? What encourages you in the journey of learning to live the life?