

Palm or Passion Sunday

Welcome to Mass. At the start of Mass today, we stand, holding aloft our palm as we look towards the main doors of the church, as Fr. Michael or Fr. Jinse introduces the palm ceremony that marks the start of Holy Week. After the opening liturgy focussed on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, we are seated to listen to the Old and New Testament readings. During the reading of the gospel passion text you are invited to read the part of the crowd marked 'C' in bold writing. We stand for the gospel reading and kneel at the time of Jesus' death.

Fr. The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (27: 1-54)

N When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people met in council to bring about the death of Jesus. They had him bound and led away to hand him over to Pilate, the governor. When Judas, his betrayer, found that Jesus had been condemned, he was filled with remorse and took the thirty pieces back to the chief priests and elders saying,

O I have sinned, I have betrayed innocent blood.

N. They replied

C. What is that to us? That is your concern.

N. And flinging down the silver pieces in the sanctuary Judas made off, and went and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the silver pieces and said,

C It is against the Law to put this into the treasury; it is blood money.

N So they discussed the matter and bought the potter's field with it as a graveyard for foreigners, and this is why the field is called the Field of Blood today. The words of the prophet Jeremiah were then fulfilled: And they took the thirty silver pieces, the sum at which the precious One was priced by children of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord directed me. Jesus, then, was brought before Pontius Pilate, the governor, and the governor put to him this question:

O Are you the king of the Jews?

N Jesus replied,

J It is you who say it.

N But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him,

O Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?

N But to the governor's complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charges. At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them,

O Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?

N For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. Now as he was seated in the chair of judgment, his wife sent him a message,

O Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him.

N The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor spoke and asked them:

O Which of the two do you want me to release for you?

N They said,

C Barabbas

N Pilate said to them,

O What am I do with Jesus who is called Christ?

N They all said,

C Let him be crucified!



N Pilate asked:

O Why? What harm has he done?

N But they shouted all the louder,

C Let him be crucified!

N Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said,

O I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.

N And the people, to a man, shouted back,

C His blood be on us and on our children!

N Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged and then handed over to be crucified. The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him. Then they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they chanted:

C Hail, king of the Jews! Hail, king of the Jews!

N And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes, and led him away to crucify him. On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him. Above his head was placed the charge against him; it read: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said.

C So, you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!

N The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way, saying,

C He saved others, he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He put his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, 'I am the son of God.'

N Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way. From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried in a loud voice,

J Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?

N that is 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood there heard this, they said:

C The man is calling on Elijah,

N and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in the vinegar and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. The rest of them said,

C Wait! See if Elijah will come to save him.

N But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

All kneel and pause for a moment

N At that, the veil of the Temple was torn into two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people. Meanwhile the centurion, together with others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said:

C. In truth this was a son of God.

Fr. The Gospel of the Lord.

C. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.



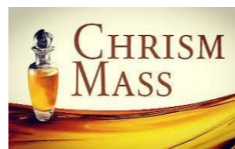


Sacrament of God's Mercy

One of the best ways we can prepare for Easter is by making a good confession. There are confessions with two visiting priests on Monday evening from 6.30pm-8.00pm. On Good Friday the sacrament is available from 4 to 5.30pm and on Holy Saturday in Ashbourne Church there are confessions from 2pm to 3.30pm. This sacrament powerfully reconciles us to God and restores grace to our soul when we stray from the path of loving God and his people. A leaflet to aid reflection will be available to help parishioners prepare for the sacrament.

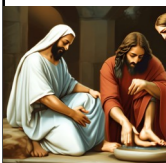
Chrism Mass 2026

The Chrism Mass takes place on Wednesday evening at 7pm in the Cathedral of Christ the King in Mullingar. At this Mass the 84 priests of the diocese renew their priestly vows before Bishop Tom, and the Holy Oils to be used in our parish in the coming year are blessed. You are asked to pray for Fr Michael and Fr. Jinse on Wednesday as they renew their priestly vows. The Mass is open to everyone to attend and it would be great if parishioners from our parish made it to this important diocesan gathering.



Holy Thursday – Mass of the Lord's Supper at 8pm

At 8pm on Thursday evening the Sacred Triduum begins as we reflect on how the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. As part of this mass, reliving Jesus' last supper, the priests of our parish wash the feet of twelve parishioners. At the end of Mass there is a Eucharistic procession with the Ministers of the Eucharist and the choir to the Altar of Repose. A period of prayer before the blessed sacrament is open to everyone as we recall Jesus' agony in the garden of Gethsemane the evening before he died. Night prayer is at 10pm.



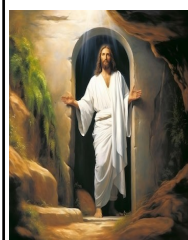
Good Friday – Day of Prayer, Fasting and Abstinence—Ashbourne Church open until 10pm

Today we pray before the cross and meditate on the meaning of the crucifix. Our parish will have outdoor Stations at 12 noon in Ashbourne Church grounds. If the weather is against us the 'Way of the Cross' will take place in the church. At 3pm the main liturgy, reliving Jesus' passion, will take place in Ashbourne and at 10am the Passion of Jesus will be brought to minds and hearts in Donaghmore. Taize Prayer Around the Cross will take place at 8pm in the Parish Centre. Everyone, who is a Christian, is asked to embrace the cross and to reflect and pray on this most sacred day of fasting and abstinence. We are keeping Ashbourne church open until 10pm to give everyone, no matter how busy or occupied on this day, an opportunity to venerate the cross.



Celebrating the Lord's Resurrection and Launch of Faith History Project

The first celebration of Easter 2026 will take place at 8pm on Saturday. Into a darkened church the new Easter candle will radiate the light of Christ. As we bless Holy Water and renew our own baptismal vows we reflect on what it means that we believe and have faith. Our Easter Masses will celebrate the new life that Jesus brings about through His resurrection. As we joyfully listen to the Easter readings and sing 'Alleluia' we celebrate the greatest news ever heard. Our churches will have an Easter Garden and be festooned in yellow and white to help young and old reflect on this great mystery of faith. At the end of the 11am Mass the children who have partaken in the Lenten Passport Project will get their final Easter sticker and an Easter gift. After the 11am Easter morning Mass parishioners are invited to gather for hospitality in the Parish Centre. On this important Sunday the Parish will begin a two month Faith History Project.



Clean Up For the Triduum

Volunteers are welcome to join the priests on Wednesday morning at 11am to clean Ashbourne Church in preparation for the Easter Triduum and the season of Easter. The more hands we get, the greater the clean up!



Mass Intentions This Holy Week

Palm Sunday 7pm Andy Carroll, Killekland, (1st Anniversary); Anne and Steve Keane; John Landers and Deceased of the Family; Jimmy Stewart; James, Ellen and Gerard McGrath; 9am People of the Parish; 10am Patrick, and Elizabeth Murray; 11am People of the Parish; 12.30pm Brian Brady; Monday Gerry Ryan; Tuesday and Wednesday People of the Parish; Easter Sunday 9am: Michael Kelly; 10am; Margaret Docherty and Maureen Weir; 11am People of the Parish; 12.30pm Cora and Christopher Lowe.



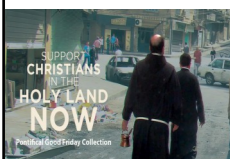
Supporting Trócaire— Your Donations Help

Please return your Trócaire Box to Mass on Holy Thursday. The Offertory Collection at this Mass of our Lord's Supper is a reminder of our outreach to the poor and goes towards Trócaire. We pray for God's blessing on the work of this Irish Church organisation as they serve the global mission of the Church to help the poor in the developing world. 'With your help, Uwamahoro and those similar to her in Rwanda can begin to rebuild their family's lives.'



Good Friday Pontifical Collection For The Holy Places

On Good Friday at the 3pm ceremony a collection will be taken up for the support of Christians in the Holy Places. Their plight is dire due to the ongoing political and economic situation. The number of Christians has reduced dramatically over the last ten years, and about two percent of the people at the holy sites profess faith and look after the sites of our Lord. With no pilgrimages for years, Pope Leo XIV reminds us that the Christian community in the Holy Land relies on our help throughout the Good Friday Collection.



Easter Offering Day Envelopes

Next Sunday is one of the main Parish Offering Days in the year. Some parishioners traditionally pay their parish dues at this time. The basket collection and the envelope collection next weekend goes towards the basic salary of the priests of our parish. If you have a box of envelopes your donation should be made in this way to help us keep account of your contributions. We thank everyone who generously supports our priests and the mission of our parish.



Join us as we Celebrate Holy Week 2026

We look forward to celebrating together as a faith community the Sacred Triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We invite you to attend the ceremonies and to grow in your personal relationship with the Lord. Feel free to bring home this newsletter listing to help you prioritise your participation in the various liturgies. Younger members are supported with the Children's Holy Week Noticeboard.

Holy Thursday – Mass of the Lord's Supper

Ashbourne Church 8pm

Good Friday – Outdoor Way of the Cross

Ashbourne Church Grounds 12 noon

Veneration of the Cross and Celebration of the Lord's Passion

Donaghmore 10 am and Ashbourne 3pm

Táize Prayer Around the Cross 8pm in the Parish Centre

Holy Saturday Vigil and First Mass of the Lord's Resurrection

Ashbourne 8pm

Easter Sunday Morning Mass

Ashbourne 9am, 11am, 12.30pm

Donaghmore 10am

We thank all those who are helping to organise and put together our ceremonies. We especially thank the Ministers of the Word and Eucharist, Sacristans, Altar Servers, Church Cleaners, Stewards, and our Musicians for the preparations that they are making to help us celebrate the central mysteries of our faith. *Míle buíochas.*

