

# Holy Spirit Province

## PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER

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### **ON THE ROAD AGAIN - WITH JESUS**

Today, we resume our journey of life with Jesus. We walk alongside him as he enters the holy city of Jerusalem for the last time. His fame as messenger of God has gone before him. He is riding triumphantly on a donkey. A big crowd has spread their cloaks on the ground before him, and has strewn his path with branches they have cut down from the trees. It's 'hip, hip hooray!' time for their hero, as they yell with excitement: 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!' There and then it is definitely not Jesus as 'the man of sorrows' that we are seeing and accompanying. How quickly, however, will things change, and change for the worst!

The Passion and Death of Jesus, the main focus of our remembering today, happened once at a definite time in history, when Emperor Tiberius Caesar ruled his vast empire from Rome, Herod Antipas ruled under him in Galilee, and Pontius Pilate ruled on the emperor's behalf, in Judea and its capital, Jerusalem. But that historical event of the Passion of Jesus, there and then, continues in a real sense in the here and now, in fact till the very end of time. I am reminded of this by the whole history of human suffering.

One graphic example! The story is told of a child killed on a scaffold by the Nazis. One witness of the horror sneered to a second witness: 'What about your God now? Where is he?' The other answered: 'God is right there in that little boy.'

In our own day the story of suffering human beings, so aptly called 'the crucified of today', continues in many people. Among the many suffering victims, are the thousands of persons crossing lands and seas all over the world, in search of a new home and a new start for themselves and their children. I feel deeply for the plight of these refugees and asylum seekers, and for everything they are made to endure as stateless persons. (Their plight is being currently captured most vividly and poignantly in the television drama 'Stateless' that is showing on Sunday night television throughout Australia at the present time).

Things that were done to Jesus in his passion have been done to them in their ordeals. They have lost their possessions. They have been betrayed by people smugglers into the hands of border patrol officials. They have been accused of crimes they did not commit. They have been passed back and forth from one bunch of officials to another. They have been subjected to beatings, name-calling, and other expressions of disrespect and contempt. Their true motives and intentions have been misrepresented. In short, their human right to seek refuge, a right enshrined in the charter of the United Nations, has been systematically ignored, opposed, or delayed. They have found themselves powerless against the prevailing mantra: 'We will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.'

As we feel for Jesus personally when Matthew's story of his passion unfolds today, let us also feel, and feel deeply, for his fellow human beings around the world who, like Jesus, have been betrayed, denied, rejected, deserted, repudiated, and, in their own particular ways, left to die a death on a cross. And let us add a heart-felt prayer that the God of resurrection and life will release them, and release them quickly, from anything and everything that humiliates and dehumanises them. Let us hold them before God with resurrection hope, hope for new life and change!

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