# HOLY WEEK & EASTER

As Christians we are more than half way through our journey this Lent through the desert places of our own souls and have turned into the home straights towards Holy Week and Easter.

The nature of our wilderness journey over these forty days has given prominence to fasting which reminds us that food is a necessary gift to be enjoyed and valued not an enemy to be resisted.

When **fasting** is combined with **prayer**, an inner disposition of ‘bright sadness’ is generated in our hearts which impresses upon us that our time is not our own, that we do not know the time or the hour of our particular ‘home-call’ (Eccles. 12:5.)

**Alms** giving and support for charity work reminds us during the Lenten season that the stranger in need is a member of the same human family equally precious to God.

So, these **three traditional observances**, having accompanied us on our journey, prepare us to enter Holy Week, and prepare us for the Resurrection in that they teach us to set aside our insistent selves and to master the ‘flesh.’ (Matt. 6:25.)

All this is in preparation for a different journey, that of being with the Saviour in his passion and death which we begin on Palm Sunday. This is the first day of Holy Week, and takes the same form as any other Sunday with a main service at 10.00am, except that at that service we listen to the story of the Passion of our Saviour read, and go on a procession together, so that we may accompany in heart and mind, our Lord as he enters Jerusalem riding on a donkey to begin his time of suffering.

At S. Philip’s we have a service every day of Holy Week (except Holy Saturday,) and on **Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday** at 7.30pm, we will be helped in our meditation to get close to Jesus by reflections from the Fathers; St. John Chrysostom (one of the patrons of our parish,) St Cyprian and St. Aelred of Rieuvaulx.

**Maundy Thursday** at 8.00pm we are invited through the \Liturgy to thank God for the gift of the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, we honour our Lord’s command to love and minister one to another and later are able to keep with him in watching and prayer as he goes to the Garden of Gethsemane

**Good Friday** we gather at 3.00pm for the Liturgy of the Passion of our Lord, when we listen again to the story of Jesus’ Passion, and through readings and prayers, we are able to honour and stand beneath the Cross, and then receive the Risen Lord in Holy Communion.

**Holy Saturday** is the only day of the year when there is no service at all in church. But in our hearts and imagination we stick with our Lord in prayer, meditating at the tomb in silence stillness hope and trust.

**Easter day**, the greatest day of the Christian year, we celebrate at the Dawn Service (5.00am) the victory of Jesus’ resurrection, a victory for all time. By the light of the New Fire we hear the story of God’s promises to his people throughout the Old Testament which culminate with the Easter mystery, we renew the promises made to God at our own baptism and then celebrate the Eucharist in the light of the resurrection. This Easter may all our lives be changed by our faithful celebration of Holy Week and Easter:

There is a normal Sunday Service at 10.00am on Easter Sunday.