

Pastor's Page

“The Horror of Holy week”

This week a New York art gallery decided to cancel an exhibit of a chocolate sculpture of Jesus after protests by a US Catholic group. The six-foot sculpture, entitled "My Sweet Lord", depicts a naked Jesus with his arms outspread. Many people have been angered and outraged by this model and have made their feelings known. Whether the intention of the artist Cosimo Cavallaro was to shock or to mock, it seems to me that he has provoked a response much like the response of people two thousand years ago to the real Jesus. Those last days of his earthly life (known now as 'Holy Week') were full of controversy and agony.

Sunday Jesus, the disciples and other pilgrims head into Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish Passover feast. Jesus commandeers a donkey (all meticulously planned) for the final part of the journey. This gets the crowd really excited. Throwing coats and palm leaves on the ground they shout out "He's the King!" "He's the Son of David" "Praise God" "Yipee!" They believe that He is the special one that God promised from long ago to send to save his people. No wonder they're excited! It's a great start to the week, but unfortunately it all ends in tears for Jesus as he surveys the city. It seems that he knows something that no-one else knows about this place. (Luke 19:41-44)

Monday. Jesus causes an even bigger stir as he as he physically drives out the money changes from the temple. The disciples have never seen him so angry. (Seems a bit un-Jesus- like!) The same day he curses a fig tree because it has no fruit on it (Is the pressure getting to him?) However, he turns this unusual act into an opportunity to teach the disciples a big lesson about faith. (Matt 21:18-22)

Tuesday A full day teaching in the temple (Matt 21:23-26:5) In the evening Jesus retires to Bethany where a woman pours expensive perfume over his head during a meal. Disciples not happy! (Matt 25:8,9)

Wednesday (Matt 26: 3-5) The plot to get rid of Jesus intensifies as he keeps a low profile and Judas makes a deadly deal. (Matt 26:14-16)

Thursday Jesus and the disciples celebrate the Passover meal together. Jesus is the host, he serves them, washes their feet, and tells them that he is going die very soon! Judas betrays him, Peter denies him, the disciples desert him as he is arrested in Gethsemane after pleading with God to change his mind about his impending death. He is then dragged through a series of illegal trials (Jewish and Roman) during a treacherous night in which he is falsely accused of blasphemy, scourged, and eventually sentenced to death. He is then taken out to be crucified.

Friday He dies a horrible death on a hill outside the city of Jerusalem. And so holy week ends in the eerie silence of a sepulchre.

But that was Friday and Sunday's coming. The day when the horror of Holy Week gives way to the euphoria of an empty tomb. The day when the shock of Crucifixion dissolves under the sweet scent of Resurrection. (Watch this space!)

1st April 2007