



## **Pastor's Page** ***"The Horror of Holy Week"***



Today we enter Holy Week which, to be honest, sounds a bit daunting!

But what does it actually mean? Well for most people it simply signals the coming of a well-earned early spring break! A time when the kids are off school, Easter Eggs are on the menu, and the motorways are groaning under the grid-locked weight of the leisure seekers! But none of this brings us even close to the significance of this Christian holy week. For that we need to go back 2000 years and walk with Jesus through the final days of his earthly life.

Sunday Jesus, the disciples and other pilgrims head into Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish Passover feast. Jesus commandeers a donkey 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" "Hooray!" 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 about this place that no-one else knows! (Luke 19:41-44)

Monday. Jesus causes an even bigger stir as he physically drives out the wheeler-dealers 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 during a meal a woman pours expensive perfume over his head in a profound act of devotion. Disciples not happy! (Matt 26:8,9)

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 serves them, washes their feet, and tells them that he is going to die very soon! Judas betrays him, Peter denies him, and the disciples desert him as he is arrested in Gethsemane after pleading with God to change the script! He is then dragged through a series of illegal trials (Jewish and Roman) during a treacherous night in which he is falsely accused of many things including blasphemy.

Friday He is scourged, beaten and eventually sentenced to death by crucifixion. He is then taken out to be executed. He dies a horrible death on a hill outside the city of Jerusalem as his distraught mother and a few friends stand by Him. His body is taken down from the cross by two secret disciples who place it in a borrowed tomb.

And so Holy Week which began with the joyful proclamation of a saviour ends in the eerie silence of a sepulchre. It's the darkest most disturbing week in the history of mankind. But it's also the most glorious as the horrors of Good Friday give way to the joy of Easter Sunday. And it's in what Jesus accomplished in those three earth-shattering days that our eternal hope lies!