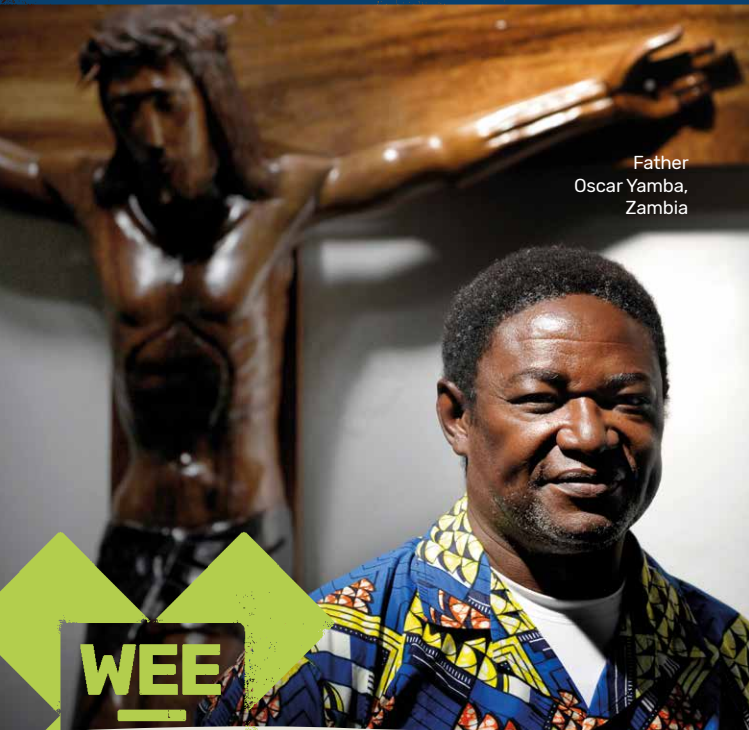


Holy Week Reflections 2023

During Holy Week, we follow Christ from his triumphant entrance into Jerusalem to the heights of the Cross, as witnesses to His Passion, before the joy of the Resurrection. **"He is not here. He has risen!"**



Father
Oscar Yamba,
Zambia

WEE

BOX

Big change

Monday of Holy Week

Read John 12:1-11

Today's Gospel reading comes after the miraculous account of Lazarus being raised from the dead. We don't know for sure how long after this miracle it was that Jesus was having dinner in this encounter, but Lazarus and Martha were there when Mary anointed Jesus with expensive oil or perfume.

Why did Mary do this? It was a selfless act of great significance. Mary was probably still overwhelmingly grateful to Jesus for bringing her brother back to life and this, no doubt, was a key factor in her humble action. It is also significant as we know that bodies were prepared for burial with oil and perfume and this was a sign pointing towards the Cross, and Jesus' selfless death for us.

Many people witnessed Jesus doing miracles but instead of this causing joy among the authorities, the Pharisees and Chief Priests gathered to see how they might kill Jesus!

Consider if you respond to the Good News of Jesus like Mary, with a grateful heart. Or in fear, like the Pharisees and Chief Priests.

**Loving Father, help me to take joy in the Good News of Jesus. Help me to proclaim this Good News to my sisters and brothers around the world and closer to home through words and action.
Amen**



Catherine, Zambia

Tuesday of Holy Week

Read John 13:12-33, 36-38

Going through a tough time and knowing things will get worse can be very troubling. Close friends betraying you can be heart-breaking.

In the Gospel reading today it tells that Jesus "was troubled in Spirit". Jesus felt things! He cried when his good friend Lazarus died. Here, he felt troubled. Not because he didn't trust God and the plan for his sacrificial death, but because the reality of betrayal, torture and his impending death was hurting him.

Jesus knew that Judas would betray him. Jesus knew that Peter would deny knowing him. Jesus knows that without his help, none of us can stand up under the strain and stress of what life throws at us.

Our sisters and brothers in Zambia that we serve through our partners often feel the pinch of life. The worry of not growing enough food in areas affected by climate change. The worry of children not being able to go to school. And the cycle of poverty continuing are all realities for thousands.

Jesus experienced loss, betrayal, hurt, and hunger and can draw alongside you in your hurt.

"We must not be afraid of solidarity; rather let us make all we have available to God" Pope Francis

Father God, thank you for Jesus. Thank you that no matter what I go through, you understand and are with me. Bless SCIAF and their partner Caritas Kabwe in Zambia as they serve my sisters and brothers in desperate need. Amen

Wednesday of Holy Week

Read Matthew 26:14–25

Having a meal with others can sometimes be a special occasion. A birthday meal or anniversary maybe. Think of how many people can be part of a wedding meal. The Passover meal was, and still is for Jewish communities, an important meal of remembrance. Jesus and his disciples were preparing for and participating in the Passover meal. Eating, drinking and reflecting on God's deliverance of their people from slavery in Egypt thousands of years earlier.

It is at this Passover meal that Jesus institutes the 'Lord's Supper' helping us to reflect and remember God's deliverance of us through Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross.

Jesus was taking part in the Passover meal and instituting the 'Lord's Supper' knowing he would be betrayed, suffer pain and be killed the next day!

Unfortunately, there is an estimated 811 million people facing chronic hunger in our world and as well as our worship in receiving Holy Communion, we are also asked to respond to the needs of the poor. Thanks to you, we are doing just that. Catherine, whose husband died in 2004 received a hand-up through our partner Caritas Kabwe and is now growing enough food for her family and earning money to develop their home.

"I just want to thank the people of Scotland for this generosity. I urge them to continue with their good deeds." Catherine Mungalaba

Lord, thank you for all I have and thank you for SCIAF and their partners who are helping thousands of families to grow enough food, set up businesses and earn an income. Amen

Holy Thursday

Read John 13:1–15

Today's Gospel never fails to emotionally, and spiritually, move people. What an act of humility and servitude from Jesus. Taking the role, not just of a servant, but of a lowly servant whose role was washing people's feet. Nothing glamorous about washing feet; nothing glamorous about being humiliated, mocked and crucified either. Jesus' life and death exudes selflessness and sacrifice.

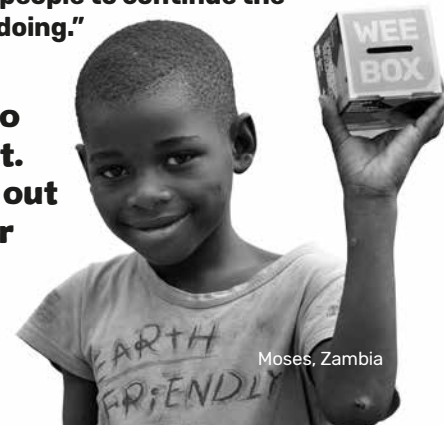
Jesus sets the example and we are to follow. Are we prepared to take on the less glamorous roles in order to serve God and others? Are we ready to sacrifice things in our lives so that others benefit? Jesus did.

This season of Lent has seen SCIAF supporters give their time, talents and money to serve God and others. Following the example of Jesus, we have witnessed young supporters give their birthday money to help families who don't know where their next meal is coming from. Volunteers have given time and talents to deliver talks to schools and Parishes. Even in times of sorrow, gifts in wills are bringing life to others.

"My fellowship with the Lord and my faith sustain me. It is encouraging to know that Scotland are helping. Please tell people to continue the great work they're doing."

Euronica Monga

Lord, help me to be your servant. To serve others out of gratitude for what you have done for me. Amen



Moses, Zambia

Good Friday

Read John 18:1–19:42

When we use the word 'good' it is normally used in relation to positive behaviour or outcomes. 'Good girl' we might say when a child does something nice. 'That was a good game' we might say when our team does well.

It is hard to comprehend that betrayal, torture and death are 'good'. Of course, in isolation from God's plan, none of these things are 'good'. We look back on the crucifixion knowing why it happened. That it had to happen for the forgiveness of sins. But at the time it would not have been described as 'good'.

It also helps being on this side of the crucifixion because we know the joy of the resurrection.

It is Good Friday because Jesus' death brings life. We have a hope that is not found in our own strength but in God's. Take time this Good Friday to ponder on the Passion and death of Jesus, and what it means to you.

"God answers my prayers. He gave me my children and my grandchildren, and they are a source of Joy. I feel happy" Kabika Mondia

Loving Father, you sent your Son Jesus into this world to live a perfect life. I thank you for the sacrifice involved in Jesus' death on the Cross. Help me understand as much as my mind can, that this action is 'good' for me. Help me to respond with a thankful heart. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

Holy Saturday

Read Matthew 28:1–10

"He is not here. He has risen!" said the angel to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as they came to visit the tomb. Would you think you were dreaming? Do you believe what your ears have heard and eyes have seen? In the same way that a young woman named Mary gave herself to the Lord's service over 30 years before this encounter, these two women were given a huge task that required great faith. On each occasion these woman became servants and followed instructions from God through an angel.

These two women rushed to go tell the disciples (with both fear and joy) what they had been told – Jesus is alive!

What news to share! What responsibility! But they were able to do it because God gave them courage and increased their faith.

On the way to see the disciples, Jesus met with them and they took hold of his feet and worshipped him. Jesus encouraged them, "do not be afraid" and he told them, "go tell the disciples they will see me soon."

What an experience this was. Only three days before they had witnessed Jesus' awful death but now, they meet him risen from the dead.

"But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power" Acts 2:24

Death could not hold Him and because of Jesus' sacrifice, we have the hope of eternal life.

Loving God. Thank you for the example of these two women in this encounter with Jesus. They were afraid but filled with joy and they shared the message of the risen Jesus. Thank you that in Jesus' death and resurrection, we have the hope of eternal life. Amen

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16



Gertrude and Gift,
Zambia

Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund

SCIAF is the official relief and development agency of the Catholic Church in Scotland and a proud member of the Caritas family. 7 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2PR. Tel: 0141 354 5555. Scottish Charity No: SC012302. Company No: SC197327. Photos by Colin Hattersley.

