

Good Friday



Baileys infused white chocolate hot cross buns – well that’s just not right! Not on Good Friday. Growing up in a middle Eastern/Mediterranean culture, one of our traditions was that you could only eat hot cross buns on Good Friday. It’s become a test these days, as these become available now just after 1 January, and we have to resist buying them for some three months. For me, hot cross buns are a reminder to ponder throughout the day, even at breakfast, the sufferings that Christ endured for us all. Baileys infused white chocolate hot cross buns just wouldn’t help me in this process of reflection.

No mass is celebrated today in any Catholic Church around the world, yet we have the Commemoration of the Passion and Death of Christ as we venerate the Cross of Jesus and partake in His body and blood through Eucharist.

The beginning of this commemoration is stark – the priest prostrate themselves before the whole community of Christ. During this sacred liturgy, we pray for the Church’s solemn intentions. In the Liturgy of the Lord’s passion this year, Pope Francis asks that we pray that our God and Lord may direct our minds and hearts towards the present Russia-Ukraine war and pray for peace.

Many Christians around the world commemorate the Lord’s passion and death through the Stations of the Cross, desiring to reproduce the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem. One year my own Via Dolorosa was escorting a family from the Melbourne Immigration Transit Accommodation (an immigration detention

centre in Australia). Permission was given to this family to be with me from midday until 8pm. I could only fit four of the family into the car, so the father had to miss out. The highlight of our day was visiting a church for the 3pm service. The family hadn’t been to a church in weeks. The day ended with the ancient ritual of *Tennebrae* at St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Melbourne. A service of sitting in the tomb with Jesus in darkness. I felt as if I was sitting with Jesus in the tomb, as I sat with the family who had been sitting languishing for years in detention.

Mary MacKillop College in Werribee, which I regularly visit, has an imposing Cross in their driveway – six metres. (*pictured above right*) Why? It’s called the ‘Cross of life’ and it’s a tangible sign and a beacon of the Catholic identity of the community. Both Augustine of Hippo and Pope Benedict XVI together with other theologians have compared Christ to the tree of life. With the tree being a tangible symbol of death and resurrection. Countless generations have experienced death and resurrection, and the ‘Cross of Life’ calls us to be in harmony with them.

One important aspect of this sculpture are the symbols used at its base. These symbols were used by the first people of the local area (the Kulin people) that represent community and the flowing river of life.

May today be a day of remembering, commemorating and venerating the action of Jesus for us all.

Rita Malavisi rsj
Victoria