

Catholic Parish of Blackiriars

Issue 21
5th April 2020
Year A

Under the care of the Dominican Fathers



VERITAS



Palm Sunday

HOLY ROSARY CHURCH

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Holy Rosary Church
will be closed until
further notice.

**If you are in Urgent need
of a Priest out of office
hours call - 6248 8253**



<https://www.facebook.com/Holy-Rosary-Parish-Watson-Canberra-105834614351072/>

A warm welcome is extended to guests & parishioners celebrating our Eucharist today.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Six days before the Passover,
when the Lord came into the city of Jerusalem,
the children ran to meet him;
in their hands they carried palm branches
and with a loud voice cried out:
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed are you,
who have come in your abundant mercy!
O gates, lift high your heads;
grow higher, ancient doors.
Let him enter, the king of glory!
Who is this king of glory?
He, the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed are you,
who have come in your abundant mercy!

FIRST READING

First Reading

Isaiah 50:4-7

The Lord GOD has given me a well-trained tongue,
that I might know how to speak to the weary
a word that will rouse them.
Morning after morning he opens my ear that I may
hear; and I have not rebelled, have not turned back.
I gave my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who plucked my beard;
my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting.

The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not
disgraced; I have set my face like flint,
knowing that I shall not be put to shame.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24

(R) My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

All who see me scoff at me;
they mock me with parted lips,
they wag their heads:
“He relied on the LORD; let him deliver him,
let him rescue him, if he loves him.” **(R)**

Indeed, many dogs surround me,
a pack of evildoers closes in upon me;
They have pierced my hands and my feet;
I can count all my bones. **(R)**

They divide my garments among them,
and for my vesture they cast lots.
But you, O LORD, be not far from me;
O my help, hasten to aid me. **(R)**

I will proclaim your name to my brethren;
in the midst of the assembly I will praise you:
“You who fear the LORD, praise him;
all you descendants of Jacob, give glory to him;
revere him, all you descendants of Israel!” **(R)**

SECOND READING

Second Reading

Philippians 2:6-11

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God something to be
grasped. Rather, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness;
and found human in appearance, he humbled him-
self, becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
Because of this, God greatly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name which is above every
name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should
bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the
earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is
Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Gospel Acclamation

Philippians 2:8-9

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
king of endless glory!
Christ became obedient for us even to death,
dying on the cross.
Therefore God raised him on high
and gave him a name above all other names.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
king of endless glory!

GOSPEL

Gospel

Matthew 26:14 - 27:66

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to Matthew

One of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot,
went to the chief priests and said,
“What are you willing to give me
if I hand him over to you?”
They paid him thirty pieces of silver,
and from that time on he looked for an opportunity
to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread,
the disciples approached Jesus and said,
“Where do you want us to prepare
for you to eat the Passover?”
He said,
“Go into the city to a certain man and tell him,
‘The teacher says, “My appointed time draws near;
in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my
disciples.”’
The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered,
and prepared the Passover.

When it was evening,
he reclined at table with the Twelve.

And while they were eating, he said,
 “Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”
 Deeply distressed at this,
 they began to say to him one after another,
 “Surely it is not I, Lord?”
 He said in reply,
 “He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me
 is the one who will betray me.
 The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him,
 but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is
 betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had
 never been born.”
 Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply,
 “Surely it is not I, Rabbi?”
 He answered, “You have said so.”

While they were eating,
 Jesus took bread, said the blessing,
 broke it, and giving it to his disciples said,
 “Take and eat; this is my body.”
 Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them,
 saying, “Drink from it, all of you,
 for this is my blood of the covenant,
 which will be shed on behalf of many
 for the forgiveness of sins.
 I tell you, from now on I shall not drink this fruit of
 the vine until the day when I drink it with you new
 in the kingdom of my Father.”
 Then, after singing a hymn,
 they went out to the Mount of Olives.
 Then Jesus said to them,
 “This night all of you will have your faith in me
 shaken, for it is written:
*I will strike the shepherd,
 and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed;*
 but after I have been raised up,
 I shall go before you to Galilee.”
 Peter said to him in reply,
 “Though all may have their faith in you shaken,
 mine will never be.”
 Jesus said to him, “Amen, I say to you,
 this very night before the cock crows,
 you will deny me three times.”
 Peter said to him,
 “Even though I should have to die with you,
 I will not deny you.”
 And all the disciples spoke likewise.

Then Jesus came with them to a place called Geth-
 semane, and he said to his disciples,
 “Sit here while I go over there and pray.”
 He took along Peter and the two sons of Zebedee,
 and began to feel sorrow and distress.

Then he said to them,
 “My soul is sorrowful even to death.
 Remain here and keep watch with me.”
 He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer,
 saying, “My Father, if it is possible,
 let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will,
 but as you will.”
 When he returned to his disciples he found them
 asleep.
 He said to Peter,
 “So you could not keep watch with me for one hour?
 Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test.
 The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
 Withdrawing a second time, he prayed again,
 “My Father, if it is not possible that this cup pass
 without my drinking it, your will be done!”
 Then he returned once more and found them asleep,
 for they could not keep their eyes open.
 He left them and withdrew again and prayed a third
 time, saying the same thing again.
 Then he returned to his disciples and said to them,
 “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?
 Behold, the hour is at hand
 when the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners.
 Get up, let us go. Look, my betrayer is at hand.”

While he was still speaking,
 Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a
 large crowd, with swords and clubs,
 who had come from the chief priests and the elders
 of the people.
 His betrayer had arranged a sign with them, saying,
 “The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him.”
 Immediately he went over to Jesus and said,
 “Hail, Rabbi!” and he kissed him.
 Jesus answered him,
 “Friend, do what you have come for.”
 Then stepping forward they laid hands on Jesus
 and arrested him.
 And behold, one of those who accompanied Jesus
 put his hand to his sword, drew it,
 and struck the high priest’s servant,
 cutting off his ear.
 Then Jesus said to him,
 “Put your sword back into its sheath,
 for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.
 Do you think that I cannot call upon my Father
 and he will not provide me at this moment
 with more than twelve legions of angels?
 But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled
 which say that it must come to pass in this way?”
 At that hour Jesus said to the crowds,
 “Have you come out as against a robber,
 with swords and clubs to seize me?”

Cont.... GOSPEL

Day after day I sat teaching in the temple area,
yet you did not arrest me.
But all this has come to pass
that the writings of the prophets may be fulfilled.”
Then all the disciples left him and fled.

Those who had arrested Jesus led him away
to Caiaphas the high priest,
where the scribes and the elders were assembled.
Peter was following him at a distance
as far as the high priest’s courtyard,
and going inside he sat down with the servants to see
the outcome.

The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin
kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus
in order to put him to death,
but they found none,
though many false witnesses came forward.
Finally two came forward who stated,
“This man said, ‘I can destroy the temple of God
and within three days rebuild it.’”
The high priest rose and addressed him,
“Have you no answer?
What are these men testifying against you?”
But Jesus was silent.

Then the high priest said to him,
“I order you to tell us under oath before the living
God whether you are the Christ, the Son of God.”
Jesus said to him in reply,
“You have said so.
But I tell you:
From now on you will see ‘the Son of Man
seated at the right hand of the Power’
and ‘coming on the clouds of heaven.’”
Then the high priest tore his robes and said,
“He has blasphemed!
What further need have we of witnesses?
You have now heard the blasphemy;
what is your opinion?”

They said in reply,
“He deserves to die!”
Then they spat in his face and struck him,
while some slapped him, saying,
“Prophecy for us, Christ: who is it that struck you?”
Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard.
One of the maids came over to him and said,
“You too were with Jesus the Galilean.”
But he denied it in front of everyone, saying,
“I do not know what you are talking about!”
As he went out to the gate, another girl saw him
and said to those who were there,

Cont.... GOSPEL

“This man was with Jesus the Nazorean.”
Again he denied it with an oath,
“I do not know the man!”
A little later the bystanders came over and said to
Peter,
“Surely you too are one of them;
even your speech gives you away.”
At that he began to curse and to swear,
“I do not know the man.”
And immediately a cock crowed.
Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had
spoken: “Before the cock crows you will deny me
three times.”
He went out and began to weep bitterly.

When it was morning, all the chief priests and the
elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to
put him to death.
They bound him, led him away,
and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

Then Judas, his betrayer, seeing that Jesus had been
condemned, deeply regretted what he had done.
He returned the thirty pieces of silver
to the chief priests and elders, saying,
“I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.”
They said, “What is that to us?
Look to it yourself.”
Flinging the money into the temple,
he departed and went off and hanged himself.
The chief priests gathered up the money, but said,
“It is not lawful to deposit this in the temple
treasury, for it is the price of blood.”
After consultation, they used it to buy the potter’s
field as a burial place for foreigners.
That is why that field even today is called the Field of
Blood.
Then was fulfilled what had been said through
Jeremiah the prophet, *And they took the thirty pieces
of silver, the value of a man with a price on his head,*

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That is why that field even today is called the Field of
Blood.

Then was fulfilled what had been said through Jere-
miah the prophet,

*And they took the thirty pieces of silver,
the value of a man with a price on his head,
a price set by some of the Israelites,
and they paid it out for the potter’s field
just as the Lord had commanded me.*

Now Jesus stood before the governor, and he ques-
tioned him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”
Jesus said, “You say so.”

And when he was accused by the chief priests and
elders, he made no answer.

Then Pilate said to him,
“Do you not hear how many things they are testify-
ing against you?”

But he did not answer him one word, so that the gov-
ernor was greatly amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast the governor was
accustomed to release to the crowd one prisoner
whom they wished.

And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called
Barabbas.

So when they had assembled, Pilate said to them,
“Which one do you want me to release to you,
Barabbas, or Jesus called Christ?”

For he knew that it was out of envy that they had
handed him over.

While he was still seated on the bench, his wife sent
him a message,
“Have nothing to do with that righteous man.
I suffered much in a dream today because of him.”

The chief priests and the elders persuaded the
crowd to ask for Barabbas but to destroy Jesus.
The governor said to them in reply,
“Which of the two do you want me to release to
you?”

They answered, “Barabbas!”

Pilate said to them,
“Then what shall I do with Jesus called Christ?”

They all said, “Let him be crucified!”

But he said, “Why? What evil has he done?”

They only shouted the louder,

“Let him be crucified!”

When Pilate saw that he was not succeeding at all,
but that a riot was breaking out instead,
he took water and washed his hands in the sight of
the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s
blood. Look to it yourselves.”

And the whole people said in reply,
“His blood be upon us and upon our children.”

Then he released Barabbas to them,
but after he had Jesus scourged,
he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus inside
the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort
around him.

They stripped off his clothes and threw a scarlet
military cloak about him. Weaving a crown out of
thorns, they placed it on his head,
and a reed in his right hand.

And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying,
“Hail, King of the Jews!”

They spat upon him and took the reed
and kept striking him on the head.

And when they had mocked him, they stripped him
of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes,
and led him off to crucify him.

As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named
Simon; this man they pressed into service
to carry his cross.

And when they came to a place called Golgotha
—which means Place of the Skull—,
they gave Jesus wine to drink mixed with gall.
But when he had tasted it, he refused to drink.
After they had crucified him, they divided his gar-
ments by casting lots; then they sat down and kept
watch over him there. And they placed over his head
the written charge against him: This is Jesus, the King
of the Jews. Two revolutionaries were crucified with
him, one on his right and the other on his left.
Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and
saying,

Cont....

GOSPEL

“You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days,
 save yourself, if you are the Son of God,
 and come down from the cross!”
 Likewise the chief priests with the scribes and elders
 mocked him and said,
 “He saved others; he cannot save himself.
 So he is the king of Israel!
 Let him come down from the cross now,
 and we will believe in him.
 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now if he wants
 him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”
 The revolutionaries who were crucified with him
 also kept abusing him in the same way.

From noon onward, darkness came over the whole
 land until three in the afternoon.
 And about three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud
 voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”
 which means, “My God, my God, why have you
 forsaken me?”
 Some of the bystanders who heard it said,
 “This one is calling for Elijah.”
 Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge;
 he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed,
 gave it to him to drink.
 But the rest said,
 “Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him.”
 But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice,
 and gave up his spirit.

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two
 from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were
 split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many
 saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming
 forth from their tombs after his resurrection,
 they entered the holy city and appeared to many.
 The centurion and the men with him who were
 keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they
 saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and
 they said, “Truly, this was the Son of God!”
 There were many women there, looking on from a
 distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, minis-
 tering to him. Among them were Mary Magdalene
 and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the
 mother of the sons of Zebedee.
 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Ari-
 mathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of
 Jesus.
 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus;
 then Pilate ordered it to be handed over.

Cont....

GOSPEL

Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in clean linen
 and laid it in his new tomb that he had hewn in the
 rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the en-
 trance to the tomb and departed.
 But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary
 remained sitting there, facing the tomb.

The next day, the one following the day of
 preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees
 gathered before Pilate and said,
 “Sir, we remember that this impostor while still alive
 said, ‘After three days I will be raised up.’
 Give orders, then, that the grave be secured until the
 third day, lest his disciples come and steal him and
 say to the people,
 ‘He has been raised from the dead.’
 This last imposture would be worse than the first.”
 Pilate said to them, “The guard is yours;
 go, secure it as best you can.”
 So they went and secured the tomb
 by fixing a seal to the stone and setting the guard.

FROM THE PARISH PRIEST



PALM SUNDAY

Today is bittersweet for we know what
 is to come. The crowds treat Jesus as
 their king, the hope for a better,
 independent Israel. They call Jesus the
 one who comes in the name of David;
 they throw palms across his way as they did for Kings
 in the past. This scenario of palm laying has been
 played out before in Old Testament times when King
 Jehu (842–815 BC) (2 Kings 9) rode into town with
 palms and robes laid on the road before him. Jehu
 had been anointed king of Israel at the behest of the
 prophet Elisha. Jehu’s selection as king came be-
 cause of his fidelity to the God of Israel after the infi-
 delity of his predecessor Ahab and his family which
 included the evil queen, Jezebel. Yet, riding a donkey
 or mule was common royal transport for instance
 Solomon rides to his coronation on a mule that be-
 longed to David (1 Kings 1:33–44), and all David’s
 sons ride mules (2 Sam. 13:29). The prophet Zechari-
 ah predicts an unnamed king riding into Jerusalem
 on a donkey .

Glad news for thee, widowed Sion;
 cry out for happiness, Jerusalem forlorn!
 See where thy king comes to greet thee,
 a trusty deliverer; see how lowly he rides,
 mounted on an ass,
 patient colt of patient dam! (Zech. 9:9)

Now Jesus rides into town on that humble beast to
 be proclaimed at first the king of Israel

by the crowds, but by the end of the week the same epithet would hang above his head as the reason for his execution.

For us at the moment we cannot come to hail our King at the liturgy, we cannot act like those crowds praising their king. We cannot take up our palms. Nevertheless we can in spirit bring ourselves in our imaginations to that first Palm Sunday by reading the gospel for the blessing of the palms. We can make that spiritual communion, but above all we need to examine ourselves too in the light of that fickle crowd.

Each of us needs to ponder within his or her own heart, am I like the crowd? Do I praise Jesus when he doesn't offend me? Do I like Jesus only when things are going well? Or, am I fickle like the crowd, one minute saying 'hosanna' the next shouting 'crucify him'? This is our challenge in the last week of Lent. How do we demonstrate our love for Jesus? In this difficult time it is easy to be angry at God, or grow cold in our devotion because things are not as they should be. Let us not so easily put off sacred things because the churches are closed and the sacraments perhaps are harder to come by. Indeed there have been many times in church history when situations such as the times we are experiencing right now have happened, even at the beginning of the church's history in Australia there were many Catholics who did not have the Mass to sustain them, yet miraculously the faith was transmitted and preserved to our own days. True faith is always tested, we only need to scan the scriptures to see that it is only in the face of hardship and difficulty that true faith endures and is verily strengthened!

To galvanise our faith and to enter into the spirit of Lent we need to first of all take seriously the call to repentance so frequently echoed these last 40 days. It would be worthwhile as an exercise in your isolation to examine your conscience, if need be go to confession (I, as your parish priest, am always available for this sacrament!). Second, make a concerted effort to do some penance, give to charity, perhaps fast from some desert or some favourite food or drink. The aim of these exercises is to shake off the possibility that we are no better than those crowds that came to see Jesus. May we find ourselves at the end of this sacred time closer to Christ, confessing his name and truly saying to him "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord".

God love you all. You're all in my prayers

Fr Mannes OP

The *Rule of Saint Benedict* encourages us to welcome all as Christ. With this, we are called to see and welcome Jesus in all whom we encounter. As we celebrate Jesus's entry into Jerusalem and hear of the people who welcomed him, think about the ways your own family welcomes Jesus through the people who visit your home. Work together to create a sign to hang near your door, reminding you to "Welcome all as Christ."

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TWO STORIES

Palm Sunday celebrates two seemingly different stories. We begin the liturgy by commemorating Jesus's triumphant journey to Jerusalem where he is greeted by shouts and songs of acclamation and joy. Everything seems to be going well. Jesus is hailed as a King and people wave palm branches to show their honour for him. By the time we reach the Gospel, however, we hear the Passion of Jesus Christ, recalling the events leading up to his crucifixion and death on the cross. It may seem strange that these two extremes are celebrated on Palm Sunday, but that is the reality of the Paschal Mystery. There is only one story. Jesus's life, death and resurrection are all connected; It is impossible to separate them as isolated events. The same is true for our lives. Everything we do is united with Christ, the good times and the difficult ones. Even when God seems distant and far away, we know that we are always connected to the story of Jesus's life, death and resurrection. We are always connected to Christ.

As we begin Holy Week, take a moment to recall this narrative of Christ with your family. What are some events from Jesus's life that stand out to you? Do you have a favourite parable or story of healing? It is important to remember that the Jesus who walked and taught and ate is the same Jesus who dies and rises again. Think too about your own life. What are some of the significant events you have experienced this past year? Recall some of these moments aloud as you continue to share the story of your family, which is also the story of Christ!

A NEW WAY OF LIFE

The coronavirus is affecting all aspects of our lives here in Australia, including our faith lives. With public celebrations of liturgy likely to be curtailed for some time, many will be looking for ways to continue to nurture their relationships with God and each other as a community of faith in coming weeks.

This new way of living comes at a high point in the Church calendar – Easter. This will be especially difficult for many. **Mass on Demand** is available online, and many parishes will run their own services online as well. But we will also need to make sure that we do all we can to help others through these periods of isolation – contacting people by phone, using technology to connect online, and finding ways to support people in need.

Australian Catholics



**PROJECT
COMPASSION**
GO FURTHER TOGETHER
PLEASE DONATE TODAY



Dominic, 47 is a former teacher and father of six from Papua New Guinea. In 2016, he became involved with the Caritas Australia's Safe House and Family Anonymous programs and turned a difficult life and an unhappy relationship around. The program

provides gender-based violence prevention training, counselling services and safe accommodation for women and children survivors of violence. Now a community trainer, he works with other men to help them to change their behaviour and build more harmonious family lives. Dominic and his wife, Christophylda say that their relationship has been transformed – and their family life is now harmonious, happy and safe.

Please donate to Project Compassion 2020 to help support the Safe House project and help bring greater harmony to families in Papua New Guinea.

Let's Go Further, Together. You can donate through Parish boxes and envelopes, by visiting www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion or phoning 1800 024 413.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

While 'social distancing' becomes the norm as we do our best to protect ourselves and our neighbours from COVID-19, there will be times when it is more difficult than others to stay positive and adhere to the rules. For many it will be the upcoming Easter Week.

The ritual of Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil/Easter Sunday has always been a chance for the parish community to come together in sadness and joy. However, it seems that only in the loss of community this year that we appreciate how much it has meant to us. [Australian Catholics](#)

SPECIAL RADIO PROGRAM

On Sunday 5 May at 3.15 pm, the Gospel readings for both Palm Sunday and Good Friday will be read as part of the Christian Perspectives program.

Also on Good Friday, 10 April, between 7 AM and 9 AM and repeated at 6 PM to 8 PM there will be special programs for Good Friday presented by Three Canberra Ministers from the Lutheran, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches and a retired lay prison chaplain.

Radio 1RPH can be heard at 1125 on the AM Dial or online at <http://www.radio1rph.org.au/listenlive> The Christian Perspectives Program is broadcast each Sunday from 2 PM to 4.30 PM on Radio 1RPH at 1125 on the AM band and can be heard on the internet via the listen live link at our website <http://www.radio1rph.org.au>



"The Lord is close to the broke hearted; and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

Psalm 34:18

In Your Prayers please remember those in our community who are ill:

Alexia Harris, Maria Martiniello, Greg O'Neill, Una Bell, Mary Martin, Barbara Wilson, Mary Bui, Anne Corver, Bernard Slammon, Fr Ellis Clifford, Maureen Dawes, Edith Jensen, Philip Bailey, Awny El-Ghitany, Joe Schimizzi, Elsie Lughton, June Pollard, Paul Neddrie, Beth Delos Santos, Margaret Sullivan, Rosa Maria Santos, Pamela Sandy, Elizabeth Webster, Frank Zobec, Zelma McManus, Mimma Giampietro, Catherine Feehan, Maureen Blood, Charlotte Woolner, Fr Joe McGeehan


Deceased

Bernard Slammon

In Memory

Anthony Benedict Joseph

KINDNESS

KINDNESS - In a world whirled askew by greed, ego, hate and malice, it's Comforting to know that an amazing tool for change is right here in our hands. It costs nothing. It can be used by young and old, rich and poor, the hearty and inform. And it's scientifically proven to work.  It's Kindness

Kindness won't fight climate change. But kindness powers the hearts of every volunteer who battles fire and floods. It's in every individual who reaches out to help the devastated reclaim balance from tragedy.

And its kindness that helps to heal the broken hearts of everyone with a life shattered by catastrophe.

Kindness rolls up in trucks to bring hope to farmers whose futures are vanishing on scorching winds.

Kindness offers gifts to disadvantaged children; helps provide a Christmas lunch to the homeless; visits the aged in care and those who are sick in hospital.

Kindness is everywhere – in a kind word or smile to a lonely person; in the deep pockets of donors supporting a cause and in a thousand and one selfless acts that tip the balance for good every day.

Interestingly, there's no such thing as a 'small act of kindness'. Kindness is never small. It's a world changer.

Kindness is love with its work boots on. And kind acts – performed by enough people – can transform the world. Kindness is contagious. Jamil Zaki wrote in Scientific American

"people imitate not only the particulars of positive actions, But also the spirit underlying them. This implies that kindness itself is contagious, And, can cascade across people, taking on new forms along the way."

Even more recent studies into the genetics of kindness suggest that the urge to be kind is hardwired into us. And right now, we all need to dig deep and draw on that as ugliness and violence push our bright and beautiful world to the dark side and forces of hate smudge the human soul.

Kindness gives us the tools we need to fight back. It empowers us to fight gently, irrevocably and without ever lifting a hand or raising a voice in anger. Kindness disarms. And we can disarm hate if you, me and people everywhere revalue kindness. Let's reverse this decline of humanism that's being forced on us by the haters... one kindness at a time.

And when better to start changing the world for the better than at the present time.