

Easter offers gift of new life

I write on Passion Sunday to wish you peace and many blessings as we celebrate the great mysteries of Holy Week.

In the introduction to today's liturgy, the Church invited us to "remember with devotion this entry (into Jerusalem) which began his saving work and follow him with lively faith."

I hope that every one of us will be able to accept that invitation: to open our hearts, minds and spirits to the words and works of this wonderful person who shows us the human face of our God.

I do not know how precisely we might hear that invitation. That will depend on the circumstances of our lives: the quality of our relationships, the peace of our spirit, the challenges we face, our strengths, the opportunities we have to grow in freedom, and the differences we can make in the lives of other people.

Part of the week's invitation is to let God's light shine on such realities, so that we can know more clearly the way we should go. An added part of the invitation is to pray for the courage to follow the path we know we should travel.

along the way



By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

A wonderful way to respond to this dual invitation, although not the only one, is to participate in the liturgical celebrations held in our parish churches on these great holy days. In those gatherings we celebrate the self gift of Christ by which he reconciles us to God. We hear the word proclaimed, break and share the bread of life and draw strength from the faith of the community with which we gather. If the circumstances of your life allow it, I encourage you to join the community for one or all of these celebrations.

I am very much aware that such circumstances simply do not allow all of you to be with us for our Holy Week celebrations. I would like you to be very much aware of the prayer of the community for you and your loved ones; and, I ask you to include us in

your own prayer.

It may be that some who read these words would like to come, but do not feel welcome to or comfortable at our celebrations of faith. That can be because of hurts experienced at our hands. It can be because of misunderstandings of what our faith teaches about matters that are sensitive and very important to you.

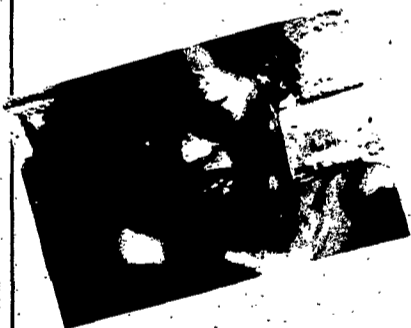
Some who wish to join us do not do so from a mistaken belief that something they have done or failed to do forever excludes them from active participation in the life of the community. If any of these ideas are part of your awareness, I ask you too to count on our prayers this week even as I ask you to pray for us. I add the invitation to contact us in some fashion so that we can communicate a more loving and accurate sense of who we are and of what we would like to become.

Easter is about reconciliation and new life. It is about gifts freely given to all of us by Christ, our savior and brother. We cannot be faithful to those gifts unless we share them as freely and lovingly with others as he shares them with us.

Peace to all.

MISSION NEWS

"Our priests must be beacons of light in the dark," said Archbishop Gabriel Zubeir Wako, of Khartoum in Sudan. "Their vocation, lived with tenacity, love and dedication is essential for the Church to become a sign of hope." The priests of whom the archbishop



Hunger and disease plague many Sudanese refugees but, their faith keeps them strong.

speaks are those who serve the more than two million refugees displaced by a decade-long civil war in Sudan. "It is a comfort to see that the refugees, although so poor, are calm, filled with the peace that come from faith," said Archbishop Wako. "This gives me courage and confirms my belief that despite the cruelties of this war, Jesus Christ is truly among us." Please pray for Archbishop Wako and the Sudanese refugees. And, please offer your help through the Propagation of the Faith.

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