

## Thought for the week

Palm Sunday — 25<sup>th</sup> March 2018

In my 10 years away at a Jesuit boarding school, the spring term did not officially end until Easter Monday. We always stayed for the Easter Services. Easter Sunday was a grand occasion. We paraded in Army uniform and were marched into Church for a Solemn High Mass, which ended with a very strong and rousing “Domine salvum fac regem” (*Lord save our King*). A small minority of boys then went home by car while most waited for special trains on Easter Monday.

Pre Vatican 2, the Holy Saturday Mass was celebrated on a Saturday morning and this was the most memorable and spectacular of the Easter Services. The back of the altar had been covered by curtains and at the beginning of the Gloria, with bells ringing and organ sounding, drapes being pulled off statues, the altar curtains were pulled back revealing regiments of flowers and masses of candles. The Brother Sacristan had connected the candles with “gun cotton” and flames shot across the altar simultaneously on both sides lighting most of the candles.

At St Michaels, we do not run to these theatrical effects (and sadly no “gun cotton”) but all our Holy Week services are conducted with real meaning and solemnity that was perhaps lost and not understood in the traditional Latin rite. The Holy Saturday service (brought forward in our Church to 8 pm) is very special. It begins with the Blessing of the Fire, and is followed with the very special Liturgy of the Word, the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, and culminates in the first Mass of Easter.

We are invited to come together to share Jesus’ journey during Holy Week through His passion and death and to joyfully celebrate His Resurrection.

Stephen