

# CATHEDRAL LIFE



## *Three Days That Change Everything*

BY FR. MARK KOWALEWSKI,  
DEAN AND RECTOR

If you would ask most people in our wider culture what is the most important Christian holiday, they probably would say Christmas. That's because so many folks celebrate Christmas even though they aren't believers. So many emotional and sentimental meanings are attached to the holiday that it makes sense people would think it's the central day in our calendar.

I'm glad there isn't so much cultural baggage attached to Easter. People may look forward to the Easter Bunny, chocolate, and even the occasional egg hunt – nowadays referred to in secular settings as a “Spring egg hunt” (let's get rid of the uncomfortable religious associations). Yet the days beginning on Thursday night until the evening of Easter Day compose the very center of our calendar as Christians. Christmas and the incarnation – God coming in the flesh is crucial, but it doesn't mean much if Jesus not only entered our human life but also our human death to give us hope on the other side. Jesus' death and resurrection turn the whole world upside down.

What we celebrate during these great three days isn't simply something that happened to Jesus but is intimately intertwined with God's hope for each and all of us for a whole new humanity. On Thursday night, the beginning of Friday as ancient Jews understood their holy days beginning with sunset the night before, Jesus sits at a meal with his disciples and the teacher shows by example

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a new way of self-giving love as he washes their feet and gives them a meal through which he will always be present with them. But then on Friday Jesus endures a shameful, horrific death that by all accounts would make him a failure. And yet, that death changed everything. Jesus' death actually engages the very real dark powers of evil and even as he goes down into hell itself to set humanity free from the bondage of death and hopelessness that held us all in its grasp.

While his body was laid in a tomb and rested on the Sabbath day, God was at work preparing for the start of a whole new creation. And very early in the morning, before the sun had risen on the first day of the week a cataclysmic seismic event happened and that Sunday morning became the first day of a whole new world, the Reign of God that begins in that garden of the resurrection and that you and I continue to make present as we wait in hope for a new creation to fully emerge in the midst of the old one.

This is not just theology. This has real implications for how we view the world and how we live in it. If we are disciples of Jesus, then we are part of that new world he began on the first Good Friday and the first Easter. We live out his way of love in all the ways we make his love present in the world – things small and great – seeds of new life planted in every word and deed in memory of him. We meet the challenges of grief and death with a belief even through our sorrow and tragedy, that there is hope beyond the grave – not only that we go to heaven when we die, but that there will be a whole new transformed reality and that in our flesh we shall see God. We believe that this world though damaged and broken will one day be made new. We believe that sin, violence oppression, death are never God's last words. Easter says God's dream of a world where pain and suffering are no more, where life is abundant, where justice rolls down like water is actually emerging within our history. That's the promise of easter.

So when you enter into the liturgies of Holy Week this year – even through your digital presence, know that you are walking together and with the risen Jesus who still teaches us to serve one another and the world. We are with a Jesus who gathers us around a holy table and is known to us in broken bread and a shared cup. We meet a Jesus who was laid in a grave and went down to the darkest place you and I can ever go and there at the tomb, where we all will one day go, he takes us by the hand and raises us up. He walks with us to tell us we are never alone. You are not alone. There is a way forward for you and for me from the darkest night to the dawning of a new day. Christ dies and is risen and that changes everything.



## ***Food Pantry***

St. John's Cathedral holds a Food Pantry every 3rd Saturday of the month from 8:30 am to 10:30 am.

We will deliver to any  
St John's seniors,  
please contact Fr. Dan.

# Who Is My Neighbor?

BY FR. DAN ADE,  
DEAN AND RECTOR

The question asked of Jesus in Luke's Gospel continues to be our question: Who is my neighbor? We've been looking at that question for almost two years now at St. John's in varying contexts. Our Food pantry guests are our neighbors and we've asked how we might better serve them. In fact, a lunch we served to everyone from the food pantry in January of last year was one of our last in-person events before the start of the pandemic.



Our social witness committee has asked this question. We've thought about ways we can serve the children and families in our local schools. We have looked at partnering with other groups like the Community Coalition to work for neighborhood change. A neighbor we sometimes forget is our environment itself, -- how we use the earth and water around us. How might we engage in more earth-friendly practices as a community to serve our neighbors? Yet the expression of neighbor-love most on my mind now right now is the ministry of Dr. Jerry Abraham at Kedren Health Center in South Los Angeles and the ways he is opening access to Covid-19 vaccines in our community, especially to underserved populations. Fr. Mark and I volunteer at the vaccine clinic twice a week as our Lenten discipline. Usually, we work with seniors especially those with mobility issues. We do whatever is needed and every day is a little bit different.

The surprising thing is that we also serve members of the medical staff who seek spiritual strength to do their work. We pray and celebrate the Eucharist and bring them communion from the community of St. Johns. So in that way, you too are sharing in this ministry with us.

Simply being there, wearing a clergy collar, doing the practical work of helping people get the vaccine, providing a bit of hope, offering a joyful and hospitable welcome, and occasionally a prayer with someone extends the ministry of Jesus and our faith community at St. John's. Our Wardens have agreed that one day of our ministry for St. John's will be spent there throughout the season of Lent.

I have learned much about how difficult it is for some folks to access medical care, especially if they must navigate transportation, have difficulty using the internet, or have limited English language skills. Yet I'm impressed that despite these challenges, there is a place that opens its doors and seeks to remove the barriers to a basic life-saving vaccine for the most vulnerable people in our community.

This is the kind of neighbor-love Jesus calls us to engage. Especially during Lent, and Easter, the season of life and healing, can we imagine still other ways to live in the Kingdom of God right here in the City of the Angels, to bring good news in the place where we are called to be the presence of the risen Lord?

All of us as disciples of Jesus have the challenge of planting those seeds of new life, resurrection life wherever we are. My hope is that you too will see how the presence of God's new creation, of resurrection love, and life may grow through your acts of neighbor-love. May we as a community here at St. John's continue to explore how we may most effectively love our neighbor and bring Easter hope in what we say and do.

## *We Continue To Hope*

BY DR. CHRIS GRAVIS, CANON FOR MUSIC & CATHEDRAL ARTS

There is hope on the horizon for choral and congregational singing. Every day over a million more Americans receive vaccinations that, in time, will allow us to sing together again. It has been a very long year without in-person music-making. As I joked at the annual meeting, it has often felt that singing musicians are the least essential, and most infectious among us.

It has also been a difficult season of endings. This February, our family of musicians lost a long-time and beloved member of the choir – Christen Herman. She had been a remarkable presence for over 20 years, leading not only with her beautiful voice, but her kind and loving spirit. And she is one of many beloved people in our community who have passed on to the larger life since we last worshiped together in person a year ago. Music usually provides us with comfort in our time of grief, and even that has been taken from us by the pandemic. When it is safe to do so, a proper Requiem mass will be sung to the memory of all those whom we have lost in our time apart from one another. All of the musicians at St. John's have missed you, one another, and the music we share in our beautiful cathedral church.

In accordance with the diocesan directives, we began safely recording small groups of socially distanced and masked musicians in St. John's in January. These musical offerings have graced our online services. Admittedly, it takes significantly more time preparing individual singer stations, setting up cameras and recording equipment, singing spaced so far apart and masked, and of course, editing the materials under a tight deadline has been no small feat. But it has brought joy to those music-makers, and we have strived to maintain the unique musical traditions of our liturgical community. This has made the challenging work worthwhile, and it has been deeply rewarding. We continue to hope.

We have continued our twice-monthly services of chanted Compline available on Facebook Live on 1st and 3rd Sunday evenings at 8.00 pm. And I have been deeply grateful to Erica and Zach Neufeld, and Caitlyn and Daniel Saunders, along with my loving and patient wife, for their enormous help in making that possible.

We are preparing to enter the holiest time of the Christian year – the Paschal triduum, in which we celebrate our Lord's glorious triumph over the forces of evil. Palm Sunday through Easter mark the most liturgically and musically rich time in our entire year. Although we will not be able to shout Hosanna marching across Adams Boulevard, wash feet while *Ubi caritas* humbly rings in our souls, or "raise the strain" under the same roof this Easter, we will still bring you the beloved sights and sounds of Holy Week to your screen. These chants, hymns, and anthems are the memories

of Easter that we hold dear, and I encourage you to sing along from home – songs of hope.



We carry resurrection hope – not just in a new year, a new administration, or even the vaccines that will allow us to once again sing together. We carry hope because the promise of resurrection is at the foundation of our faith. We will worship together again, we will sing together again, and the life of St. John's Cathedral will flourish. We're almost there – through the Red Sea brought at last.



## *Our Year of Music, In Gratitude*

BY MR. STEPHENS SALTS,  
DIRECTOR OF CATHEDRAL CHORAL ACADEMY

As we reach the unexpected milestone of one year away from being together inside in Cathedral building, I am amazed at the progress our choristers have achieved in their weekly virtual lessons with me, as well as the continued generous support of the Cathedral Choral Academy from our St. John's community. Sustaining this budding new ministry during this difficult time has taken a village, and prayerful reflection this Lent has brought to mind the many people for whom I am particularly grateful.

To my brilliant music colleagues, Dr. Christopher Gravis and Dr. Zach Neufeld – Without your vision and tireless work, both musically and as overnight film editors, producers and directors, I would simply be lost in the world of virtual music-making. You have the deepest gratitude from myself and the choristers.

To the Deans, Deacon Margaret, Mother Lyn, and the Vestry – The choristers and I are so grateful for the many opportunities you have given us to participate in online services over the course of this year. From glorious Advent and Christmas carols to reflective anthems for Lent, the choristers have been honored to contribute their talents to the wondrous liturgical feasts of the past year.

To our congregation and members of the Cathedral Arts Guild – Your continued encouragement and generous support of the Cathedral Choral Academy allows this ministry and our music to continue. The choristers are growing into their bright musical futures thanks to you, and we continue to be proud that each and every child is on a full scholarship.

And of course, I must personally thank and congratulate the inspiring children and their families who make up our Cathedral Choral Academy. You all move us so deeply with your commitment, adventurousness, talent, and humor. Thank you, Aminah, Chloe, Elias, Ilsa, Kaylin, Leonard, Rory, and Zoey!

To learn more  
about  
The  
Choral  
Academy

Contact Mr. Salts at  
[ssalts@stjohnsla.org](mailto:ssalts@stjohnsla.org)

Join us for  
**COMPLINE**  
EVERY 1ST & 3RD  
SUNDAY  
OF THE MONTH  
AT 8 PM FACEBOOK LIVE

## *New Website*

We are excited to announce that the new St. John's Cathedral website has been published. You can check it out by going to  
[www.stjohnsla.org](http://www.stjohnsla.org)

PASSION SUNDAY // MARCH 21, 2021

**8am Mass In The Garden**  
WITH RESERVATION

We are glad to announce that we will start having mass in the garden once again. To attend you must make a reservation with the Church Office. You can email at [churchoffice@stjohnsla.org](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsla.org)

**11am Lessons & Carols of the Passion**  
ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

We begin Holy Week with a Sunday service of Lessons and Carols of the Passion.

PALM SUNDAY // MARCH 28, 2021

**8am Mass In The Garden**  
WITH RESERVATION

Bishop Diane Bruce joins us in person at our outdoor mass in the garden. To attend you must make a reservation with the Church Office. You can email at [churchoffice@stjohnsla.org](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsla.org)

**11am Solemn Mass For Palm Sunday**  
ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

Bishop Diane Bruce joins us online for Palm Sunday Service.

MAUNDY THURSDAY // APRIL 1, 2021

**7pm Maundy Thursday: Evening Mass**  
ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

An Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, stripping the altar and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

GOOD FRIDAY // APRIL 2, 2021

**12pm Good Friday: Solemn Liturgy**  
ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

HOLY SATURDAY // APRIL 3, 2021

**12 pm Holy Saturday In-Person Service**  
WITH RESERVATION

An in-person service at the icon of our Lord's burial between 12 pm at St. John's, please reserve a time. You can reserve your time by emailing [churchoffice@stjohnsla.org](mailto:churchoffice@stjohnsla.org)

**8pm The Great Vigil of Easter**  
ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

An online evening service with Bishop Taylor and participants from across the diocese.

EASTER SUNDAY // APRIL 4, 2021

**11am Easter Day Festival Eucharist**  
ON FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE

Easter celebration online with the cathedral choir, brass and organ.

**There will be no 8am mass in the garden.**

