

Homily for Passion Sunday (Extraordinary Form Mass) 2020  
Father Francis de Rosa  
Delivered at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church in King George, VA

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Greetings to all of you, parishioners and friends, who are watching this Holy Mass from afar. My name is Father Francis de Rosa, and I am the pastor of St. Elizabeth of Hungary Church in Colonial Beach Virginia and St. Anthony of Padua in King George Virginia.

Today is Passion Sunday in the extraordinary form of the Roman Mass, and we fast approach Holy Week.

This is also the second Sunday that we have had to close our doors due to the coronavirus pandemic of 2020. Yet we are able to be with you in this new medium and I thank you for your devotion. There are even parishioners outside our doors who are seeking to be as close as possible to the great and holy Sacrifice of the Mass!

The Mass is the mystical representation of the Death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. It is the ritual and sacramental act of worship given to us by Jesus Himself at the Last Supper. The Last Supper looked forward to the Cross in time, while every Mass since looks back to that supreme moment.

But the Mass is not just a looking back, it is not just a memorial. For it “makes present” if you will, the saving grace of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Jesus Christ. This is an important point: The fundamental ritual form of the Mass was instituted by Christ and “realizes,” or “actualizes” the power of the Cross.

It is the supreme act of Christian worship, the epicenter of the Christian life and is the very spiritual heartbeat of the world. No other act of Christian worship - no matter how devout - can ultimately match the power of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This gives us as Catholics great reason for confidence during this pandemic, for the Mass is the greatest spiritual weapon against evil and it is being offered still, despite the attempt from below to suffocate it.

If we understand this deeply, then we will not simply regard Mass as “going to church.” We will be in awe of the gift of God who enables us to stand, mystically and trans-historically, if you will, at the very foot of the Cross.

Jesus has provided a way for His disciples to benefit from the power of the Cross in this act of worship. We tend to become familiar with the Mass, perhaps losing our original innocence and awe before its majesty. Yet it remains, as I said, the heartbeat of the world.

This consideration ought to help us to gain a very deep and penetrating insight into the spiritual warfare brought upon us by the coronavirus pandemic.

Yet the Mass goes on. And we can unite ourselves to it in these troubling times. Perhaps we will gain a renewed appreciation of its splendor and importance. Perhaps we will emerge from the crisis with a deeper Christianity.

During this crisis we your priests have been hearing your concerns. We have seen you in our churches praying. We have heard your confessions and prayed for you daily.

Know, my good people, that the Church is still strong. There are countless millions of us united in prayer beseeching the Good Lord to look down upon us with favor and to spare us.

There is hope. We are strong. We will emerge and continue our earthly journey to the home prepared for us by Our Father in Heaven!

God love you!