

Fr Hugh's Homily for Palm Sunday 2026

Let's throw our minds back to the very beginning of Jesus' teaching. Remember in the Sermon on the Mount, one of the most testing things he says is 'love your enemies.' Today in the most awful circumstances we see Jesus putting this into effect. Who are these enemies? Sadly even his friends were among them.

Peter and Judas. Two loved disciples. Walked with him, ate with him, listened to his teaching, and Jesus' hope for the future.

Yet these two betray him.

Judas simply from a desire for money. Nothing else. A life against greed. A life Judas knew to be good, wonderful in all Jesus had done, yet with a friend's kiss handed over to death. Then betraying his own life, God given life, refusing to trust in Jesus' love and forgiveness.

Peter, the foundation of the Church to come. Weak. Unable to speak for Jesus even before a serving girl. Utterly undone by Jesus' arrest. His conscience, his love for Jesus, crushed by fear.

Pilate. Senses this is a good man. An innocent man. Warned by his wife, 'This is a righteous man, have nothing to do with him.' But cannot dare to do the right thing. And then pitifully trying to escape responsibility, washing this hands of Jesus' death.

Yet each and all of them loved by Jesus.

In each of these cases Jesus is still loving and teaching us.

Where would we have stood? Have stood perhaps.

The large and small betrayals we can commit.

Desire for money. Fear. Escaping responsibility. Standing on the sidelines and refusing to commit.

The inability to love to the end.

Of all those standing there, a Gentile, a centurion, sees Jesus for who he is.
Son of God.

And there are those who brave the Roman and Jewish rulers and honour him to the end.
Taking him and burying him.

And Jesus saying to us, love, and love your enemies as I teach you to do. Because in my cross, my offering of love, is the salvation of all.