

# Parish of Central Exeter

Palm Sunday

28<sup>th</sup> March 2021



## The final journeys.

Welcome everyone.

*The journey of Holy Week starts with Palm Sunday, but we need to travel a bit beyond the account of this day to include some of the other events that took place before Good Friday. Even so, much will still be omitted. Rather than have a reflection on the Palm Sunday story from Sheila, we shall encounter three Biblical passages each with an associated prayer for you to respond to as you wish. Our intercessions, which have been provided by Jess from a service at Llandaff Cathedral, help us also to move on through Holy Week to prepare for the triumph of Easter Day. In Night Prayer Keith will explore other ideas arising from this day.*

### **Today is Palm Sunday**

Children of God, Rejoice!  
Sing out in celebration, God's people!  
Your King is coming to you,  
humble, riding on a donkey, on a donkey's foal.  
Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the one who comes in the Lord's name.  
Glory to God! Hosanna!

### **Preparing for worship**

The story of Palm Sunday tells of how  
people removed their cloaks and spread them out  
in front of Jesus as he entered Jerusalem.

The cloak we wear every day to face the world  
is both the persona we wish to present,  
and our defence against the elements.

As we come to worship may we be willing  
to lay down our defences and disguises,  
at the feet of the One who sees us we really are.

And then, set free for worship,  
may we offer our praises  
with open hearts and lives.

*(written by Ann Siddall, and posted on the website of the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre.)*

## Gathering Hymn

'Ride on, ride on, in majesty', sung here at St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich. Words on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zo5pfl6z6lA&t=1s>

## Call to Reconciliation

We sing, we wave our branches, we shout 'Hosanna.'  
Then, we turn away, to go back to our old ways,  
our old lives, our old sins.  
But God is in the business of granting forgiveness  
and filling us with new life.  
Let us confess to the One who comes to fill us with grace.

## Prayer of Confession

With eager hearts and open hands, Holy One,  
we welcome Jesus,  
until he refuses the power we offer him,  
choosing to become our servant.

We pick up the faith we had laid on the ground before him,  
and put it back on the shelf where it belongs.  
Our pride keeps us from being able to follow him  
all the way to Calvary.

Hosanna, Steadfast God, save us!  
Help us to let our fears, our doubts, our faithlessness  
slip from our lives to fall at your feet,  
so we may stand with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ,  
who comes in your name,  
in your glory,  
in your grace to save us.

*Silence is kept*

## Assurance of Pardon

Tell the daughters of despair,  
proclaim it to the sons of sadness:

Christ has come to save us!  
Hosanna!  
We will give our thanks to God,  
who comes to bring us grace, hope, life.  
Hosanna in the highest. Amen!

*(written by Thom Shuman, and posted on Lectionary Liturgies)*



## Collect for Palm Sunday

True and humble king,  
hailed by the crowd as Messiah:  
grant us the faith to know you and love you,  
that we may be found beside you  
on the way of the cross,  
which is the path of glory.

## Worship music

Before we start our period of reading and reflection, we hear The Trisagion – this is a hymn or chant of praise sung normally as part of an Orthodox service just before the reading of the Gospel. The music in this version has been composed by the precentor of the Convent Festival Choir of Saint Elisabeth, Minsk, Belarus, who is also a nun at the convent, where it was been filmed on Palm Sunday 2020.

Holy God, Holy [and] Mighty, Holy [and] Immortal, have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy [and] Mighty, Holy [and] Immortal, Have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy [and] Mighty, Holy [and] Immortal, Have mercy on us.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfKAytOy00s>

## Readings and prayers – a time for (quiet) reflection.

### The entry into Jerusalem Mark 11: 1-11

**11** As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, <sup>2</sup> saying to them, ‘Go to the village ahead of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>3</sup> If anyone asks you, “Why are you doing this?” say, “The Lord needs it and will send it back here shortly.”’

<sup>4</sup> They went and found a colt outside in the street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it, <sup>5</sup> some people standing there asked, ‘What are you doing, untying that colt?’ <sup>6</sup> They answered as Jesus had told them to, and the people let them go. <sup>7</sup> When they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it. <sup>8</sup> Many people spread their cloaks on the road, while others spread branches they had cut in the fields. <sup>9</sup> Those who went ahead and those who followed shouted,

‘Hosanna!’ ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’

<sup>10</sup> ‘Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David!’

‘Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

<sup>11</sup> Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

### **Reflective prayer**

Let us stay with the Hosannas for a while  
Let us let them keep on ringing in our ears

Hosanna!  
Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord  
Instead of rushing on to hear the cries  
that came later in the week  
Let us stay with the Hosannas.

Maybe once we have heard those  
in a new way  
we will be ready  
to make the rest of the journey

A journey that was hastened  
and given new purpose  
by those Hosannas.

For those Hosannas were not  
simply the innocent cries  
of palm branch waving children  
Those Hosannas were the war cries of adults  
tired of the oppression  
of occupying forces.

Those hosannas  
were the hopeful cries  
of a nation seeking liberation.  
Those Hosannas  
were an investment of hope  
in one they thought would deliver.

Those Hosannas  
that we have sanitized over the years  
rang out in clear insurrection  
sealing the fate  
of one who rode on a donkey.

So, let us stay with the Hosannas  
Let us wrest them from the lips of children  
and allow them to ring in our ears

and spew from our mouths  
as a call to action  
a call to justice  
a call to love.

Let us stay with the Hosannas  
even as we journey  
with the Christ  
who carried those Hosannas  
all the way to the cross  
and ensured their fulfilment  
as the justice and love of God.  
Let us stay with the Hosannas.

*(written by Rev. E. Crumlish of Castlehill Church, Ayr. Posted on the Church of Scotland's Starters for Sunday website.)*

### **Hosanna to the Son of David**

(A short traditional chant in English.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=keMmxqTk1qw>



### **Reading**

#### **Jesus in the Temple Mark 11: 15-19**

<sup>15</sup> On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those selling doves, <sup>16</sup> and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. <sup>17</sup> And as he taught them, he said, 'Is it not written: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations"? But you have made it "a den of robbers".'

<sup>18</sup> The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

<sup>19</sup> When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city.

**Reflective prayer** (You have met this one before)

Truth be told, Jesus,  
There are lots of tables that need overturning  
in our lives;

Beneath the veneer of respectability  
the tidy rows and neat regulations  
hide dark addictions and angry judgements  
hungry greed and heartless rejections.

We know the pain—and so do those around us—  
of keeping up the facade;  
What a relief it would be to have it all  
upset, smashed, scattered, destroyed.

So, perhaps, Jesus, today you could pay us a visit  
and help us to radically re-arrange  
the furniture of our lives. Amen.

*(written by John van de Laar, and posted on Sacredise.)*

**Short Reflective Gregorian Chant**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTXiqoGnbKU>



## Jesus is anointed at Bethany John 12: 1-8

**12** Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. <sup>3</sup> Then Mary took about half a litre of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.



<sup>4</sup> But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, <sup>5</sup> 'Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.' <sup>6</sup> He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

<sup>7</sup> 'Leave her alone,' Jesus replied. 'It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.'

### Reflective Prayer

Mary moved to the table,  
holding the precious ointment,  
her eyes meeting and holding  
the gaze of the One preparing to die.

Mary fell to her knees  
and broke open her treasure,  
massaging the fragrant oil into his feet,  
and wiping them with her hair.

Mary kept her eyes on his,  
as a collective sigh arose,  
followed by a bitter criticism,  
an attempt to disqualify her action.

Mary's tense shoulders relaxed  
at his words "Leave her alone":  
Defended by Jesus  
she could take on the whole world.

Jesus, friend and defender,  
may we who remember her story,  
be emboldened to live  
with sensuality, courage and passion. Amen.

*(written by Ann Siddall, and posted on the website of the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre.)*

### **Worship Song**

'Meekness and Majesty' by Graham Kendrick. It is in our hymn book, but I'm not sure how well we know it. It is sung for us here by the children of Ysgol Dafydd Llwyd, Newtown, Powys, in English and Welsh. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28Div-17s0>

### **Intercessions**

*We have begun the journey of Holy Week. In our time of intercession for others and ourselves we are reminded of some of the events of the rest of this week and link them through to life today.*

Almighty God, as we approach Holy Week and reflect on Christ's passion, may we truly understand the sacrifice he made for us.

Despite being unable to gather in our places of worship, we give thanks for all those who are putting together worship online, enabling us to be together in spirit as we relive the Easter story, a story which fills us with hope and confidence that there will be an end to the chaos of the Covid-19 pandemic.

*Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

We think of Christ the servant:

Holy God, teach us to be generous. Teach us to serve you as you deserve; to give and not to count the cost, to fight and not to heed the wounds, to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do your will.

*Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

We think of Christ at prayer while his disciples slept:

Holy God, we recognize that sometimes we put off prayer and thanksgiving as we give way to our very human frailty. We thank you for those who pray and intercede on our behalf both in heaven and here on earth.

*Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

We think of Christ betrayed by a kiss and with denials:

Holy God, help us never to abandon someone in their time of need. Help us to forgive those who have wounded and abandoned us in times of crisis. Cleanse our hearts from bitterness and resentment, so we can be more like Jesus, who was abandoned and betrayed by those closest to him.

*Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

We think of Christ falsely tried, tortured and executed:

Merciful God, we pray today for those held and tried falsely by corrupt regimes, knowing they have no hope of justice. We remember all prisoners, especially those enduring inhumane conditions and in fear of execution. Be with them in the darkness of their cells, in the loneliness of separation and in their fear.

*Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

We think of Christ's compassion despite receiving none himself:

Loving God, we pray for all who bring comfort, care and healing, especially our Health Services bravely caring for those in need in this worldwide crisis. We pray for the sick, the sorrowing, those who have recently died and those who have been bereaved.

*Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Holy God, as we move through Holy Week, we commend ourselves, and all those we love and whom we live among, for whom Christ suffered, to your mercy and protection.

*Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen*

## **Worship song**

'May the mind of Christ my Saviour.' Sung here by the Scottish Festival Singers. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gE5fOXSymBc>

### **'A sort of affirmation of faith'**

some shout hosanna  
some shout crucify  
some shout Jesus  
some shout Barabbas  
some wave palms  
some shake their fists  
*today we choose...*

some are angry  
some rejoice  
some anoint with costly perfume  
some complain at the waste  
some like the light  
some prefer the shadows  
*today we choose...*

some weep some follow  
some hide  
some believe  
some betray  
*today we choose*

to shout for life  
to follow the cross  
to break bread  
to hold belief  
to trust love  
and tell the world  
*we choose to follow Jesus*

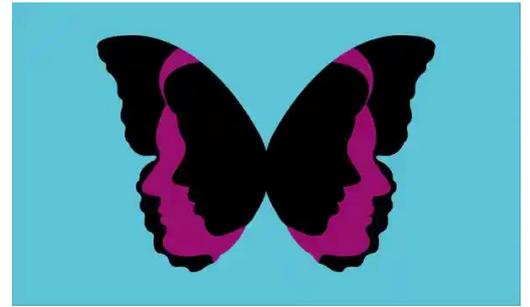
*(written by Roddy Hamilton, and posted on Listening to the Stones.)*

### **The Peace**

If alone, smile and hug yourself (God does). If otherwise, share the Peace as appropriate.

### **A short Spiritual Communion**

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', even when we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.



Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

O God,  
help me to trust you,  
help me to know that you are with me,  
help me to believe that nothing  
can separate me from your love  
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **An offertory prayer**

*We may not be in church, but we can still offer ourselves and our talents to God.*

Blessed are you, God and creator of the universe,  
as we offer you our activities, thanksgivings and our life.  
We present ourselves, and our world, as we are and as you can make us,  
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours,  
and of your own do we give you. Blessed be God for ever.

*As we prepare for communion you might like to listen to music for Spiritual Communion, using words originally by St Alphonsus Ligouri, an eighteenth century Catholic Bishop and founder of the Redemptorists Order. These words are echoed in our own prayer below. Words are on the screen.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIXgkIaGXgQ>

*Because there is no Breaking and Sharing we can have only Spiritual Communion with Christ. I'm sure you can find a way to use a few minutes of silence or conversation to enjoy this, and make it a sacramental moment.*



*Giving thanks for Christ's death and resurrection  
you may wish to say*

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits you have given me,  
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.  
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

## **Post Communion Collect**

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant,  
and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation:  
give us the mind to follow you  
and to proclaim you as Lord and King,  
to the glory of God the Father.

## **Commission and Benediction**

But like humble Jesus riding into town on a lowly colt,  
you aren't coming in grandeur,  
you aren't coming with thunder and lightning,  
you aren't making an epic entrance.

You're coming through the mystery of love incarnate,  
through your church empowered by your Spirit,  
through lives transformed and inspired,  
through ordinary people like us,  
blessed by you to do extraordinary things.

Come, gracious God  
into a world that longs for change,  
a world that needs your love,  
a world full of your own children,  
a world ripe with hope and potential.

Blessed are those who come in your name, O God.  
We have come.  
We will go.

## **Closing Music**

All Glory, laud and Honour', sung here by the St Michael's Singers. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBfJyjDolwA>

**Scroll down for Coffee Break**

## Coffee Break

### Happy Annivirusy!

On Palm Sunday last year we sent out our first email service sheet, complete with two hymns! We did not expect to be sending out the sheets one year later or the nature of our weekly worship to change for so long. During this one year we have used over 200 separate pieces of music. I don't have a list of the art works shown, but it must be getting on for thirty, and add to that innumerable illustrations. It's amazing what we have achieved, and huge thanks to everyone who has contributed – and you also contribute when you use it!

As it is a year on, I wondered what other anniversaries are being celebrated on March 28. A search on Wikipedia showed few events of any major significance, but go on one day to March 29, and it gets far more interesting!

- 845 Paris sacked by Viking Raiders
- 1461 Battle of Towton, Wars of the Roses, the bloodiest battle on English soil.
- 1857 Beginning of the rebellion against the East India Company rule in India, generally known here as the Indian Mutiny.
- 1871 Queen Victoria opens the Royal Albert Hall
- 1886 John Pemberton brews the first batch of Coca-Cola in his back yard in Atlanta
- 1912 The deaths of Capt. Scott and his Polar Expedition Party returning from the attempt to be the first to reach the South Pole.
- 1945 The last V1 flying bomb attacks on Britain
- 1973 The last US combat soldiers leave Vietnam.
- 1974 The Terracotta Army discovered in Shaanxi Province, China.
- 2014 The first same sex marriages are performed in England and Wales
- 2019 Theresa May formally invokes Article 50 of the European Union Treaty, signalling the start of the Brexit process.

It is also the day on which you may venerate the sixth century Welsh Saint Gwladys whose life also appears to involve King Arthur who fancied her. It's also the birthday of John Major and Eric Idle.



**Scroll Down for Night Prayer**

# Night Prayer

Palm Sunday  
28<sup>th</sup> March 2021

*Alea iacta est: the die is cast.*



## Introduction

In 49 BC, the Roman general and governor of Cisalpine Gaul (Southern France), Julius Caesar, was recalled to Rome, and his governorship terminated. The legions he commanded were to stay behind. But Caesar took one legion with him and with them on 10 January crossed the boundary between Gaul and Italy, marked by the River Rubicon. This was viewed by the Roman republic as treason and a declaration of war on the Senate. Caesar's comment is traditionally 'alea iacta est' – the die is cast. For us the phrase 'crossing the Rubicon' has come to mean passing the point of no return (often on a risky enterprise).

And Jesus and his followers stand at the city gates.

*How and where will you enter the City today  
In humility yet also as a king  
And what would our expectations be of you?  
What shall we lay before your feet  
And how shall we welcome you?*

## Opening prayer

God of the cross, tottering down the streets of Jerusalem on a donkey,  
You are not the saviour we expect.  
Your power doesn't look like the power we want our God to have.  
Your wisdom makes no sense to us.

The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem.

Danila Vassiliev 1947



## **This Evening's Music**

Our first song tonight is 'Who wants to live forever? No it's not a hymn – the most well-known version is by Freddy Mercury and Queen but here it is sung by Sarah Brightman. I think it poses a relevant question especially at the start of Holy Week. Can time and eternity relate to each other in any way? And can we find an answer in the Easter message?

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRTr\\_Df9\\_BE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRTr_Df9_BE)

## **Reading appointed for today**

### **Isaiah 50: 4-7**

<sup>4</sup>The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue,  
to know the word that sustains the weary.

He wakens me morning by morning,  
wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.

<sup>5</sup>The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears;  
I have not been rebellious,  
I have not turned away.

<sup>6</sup>I offered my back to those who beat me,  
my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from mocking and spitting.

<sup>7</sup>Because the Sovereign Lord helps me,  
I will not be disgraced.

Therefore have I set my face like flint,  
and I know I will not be put to shame.

None of the Gospels tell us anything about how Jesus had prepared himself or his disciples for the entry into Jerusalem or what might follow. It might have been just taking advantage of a fortuitous situation, but that doesn't seem like Jesus. The account suggests that the logistics had been thought about, because procuring the donkey must have been pre-arranged. So we have to presume that Jesus had a plan in mind and would have been well aware of the dangers he was running (and for his followers too.)

It seems that his intention is to deliver the final challenge to the religious authorities, which occurs through his cleansing of the Temple, and continue teaching and healing. The Gospels show this for example in his comments on the question 'which is the most important commandment?' suggesting religious practice based on the loving God being shown practically through loving your neighbour as yourself. But will the religious authorities co-operate? Will others follow him? It's a risky business, and certainly seems like a Rubicon moment. Once begun, there'll be no going back.

## Reflective Prayer

We are happy to join the crowd, waving branches,  
but not so sure we want to follow you through this Holy Week:  
into the temple courts  
into the upper room  
into the Garden of Gethsemane  
to the high priest's house,  
to the assembly of elders,  
to Pilate,  
to Herod,  
to the place of The Skull,  
*to the foot of the cross.*

One problem that we have in dealing with any of the four Gospel accounts is that the Gospels do not work as if they were cameras recording an event as it happened, and Jesus doesn't hold press conferences. The accounts were written several decades afterwards in the full knowledge of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the institution of the church and (most likely) the work of St Paul. This means the Gospel writers have no real interest in what Jesus and his disciples might actually have been thinking before the entry, because they knew what the ultimate outcome was, and this affected how they told the story. So the Palm Sunday story cannot be isolated from the remainder of the Passion narrative and purpose. It all becomes part of the Divine plan for the redemption of the world and that raises all sorts of questions about the extent to which the players in this drama were acting for themselves.

The shaping of the whole Passion story was also influenced by what we know as the four servant songs of Isaiah, which Christians consider to be speaking prophetically about Jesus. Our OT reading above is part of the third song. The key point is that we have a servant who suffers – and that enabled the early church to make the link between the suffering of Christ (in his trial and crucifixion) and serving God's divine will.

This enabled the early medieval Christian writers to encourage their congregations, many of whom would experience physical suffering as part of their lives (nasty, brutish and short – as the epithet runs) with just the occasional triumphant good day, to see in this a reflection of Christ's own life, and Jesus as someone who was steadfast amongst all the changes of fortune that the world throws at us, and that's something that still echoes today! (It's also much safer ground than trying to work out the theology of what is happening!)

So now the day is over- what are we left with?

### **Prayer for Palm Sunday:**

something happened here  
but no one can name it  
and belief doesn't dare name at what might have begun.  
a messiah arrived  
but the kingdom did not.  
palm branches  
and cloaks  
were strewn in mock adulation  
but heaven remains silent.

faith tells us we must we wait longer.  
a different voice is coming  
and another moment  
to name love

and crush this ache  
and break this ironic silence  
with the sound of death  
and the shutting of a tomb.

*(written by Roddy Hamilton, and posted on Mucky Paws website.)*

### **Sending words**

And now we lay down the palm branches.  
And with them we lay down our belief  
that there is another way for you to be God.

As the last echo of the final alleluia fades,  
so does our hope that this journey can end  
in any other way.

The week stretches ahead  
glory-less  
and pain-full

Whether we walk with all faith or none  
we look towards the cross,  
knowing it is both the most human  
and most divine  
of all journeys

travel the road with courage,  
with love,  
and with the uneasy peace that is the gift of faith  
into this holiest of weeks.

Amen.

*(written by Cheryl Lawrie and posted on [hold this space]. <http://holdthisspace.org.au/>)*

### **Closing music**

We are closing with 'O Sacred Head sore wounded'. This is part of a long medieval poem originally in Latin, possibly written by Bernard of Clairvaux or Arnulf of Leuven. Take your choice. The tune was used by Bach in his St Matthew Passion. There are several translations into English. Performed by the Gesualdo Six.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R\\_OBbjAfVrI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_OBbjAfVrI)

### **Thanks**

*Thanks to everyone who has participated, especially to Jess for the intercessions. Material taken or adapted from other websites has an attribution made where possible.*

