



INTRODUCTION

Today is Palm Sunday, the start of Holy Week where we mark the final days of Jesus' life and prepare to celebrate Easter.

If Church were open, you would have been given a Palm Cross on your way in and following a blessing we would have processed around church remembering Jesus triumphant arrival into Jerusalem..



CONFESSION

We stand with Christ in his suffering.

For forgiveness for the many times we have denied Jesus,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For grace to seek out those habits of sin which mean
spiritual death,
and by prayer and self-discipline to overcome them,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For Christian people,
that through the suffering of disunity
there may grow a rich union in Christ,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who make laws, interpret them, and administer them,
that our common life may be ordered in justice and mercy,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who still make Jerusalem a battleground,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who have the courage and honesty to work openly for justice and peace,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those in the darkness and agony of isolation,
that they may find support and encouragement,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who, weighed down with hardship, failure, or sorrow, feel that God is far from them,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who are tempted to give up the way of the cross,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

That we, with those who have died in faith,
may find mercy in the day of Christ,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

**May the Father of all mercies
cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**



BIBLE READINGS

Philippians 2.5-11

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself

and became obedient to the point of death –
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Matthew 21.1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately." This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey." The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."



REFLECTING ON SCRIPTURE

Suppose you are choosing a new leader for your fellowship.

What would your ideal person be like? What would be a nightmare? What might need to be changed or challenged by the new leader? What do you hope will be retained? Reflecting on our own context, we can perhaps sympathise with the authorities in Jerusalem who learned to live with the status quo. They had experienced the dangers of fanaticism and its terrible cost. They had foreseen that this newcomer, Jesus, with his radical ideas and undoubted integrity, might demand more than they want to surrender! Would Jesus be our ideal candidate, or would

we prefer someone less challenging and confrontational?

Good news – the Messiah has come! The people acclaim him. Bad news – they see somebody else. They wanted a conquering monarch, a military leader, not a peacemaker riding on a donkey, on the way to a cross. Expectations can distort vision, so for many – those who want quick solutions rather than the revolution of the heart – Jesus is a disappointment. In a culture that worships power, celebrity and heroes, Jesus is seen as a failure. Yet power declines, celebrity fades, heroes dwindle. Read 'Ozymandias'. What endures? What sustains? In a world of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, who will we follow?

In this week's readings, we see a community on the move. Are there any signs of such a movement in our local community? If so, is it a retreat or an advance? Does it engender in us excitement or fear? As Christ's community, how do/should we respond? Do we see whatever it is that's happening as a threat to our situation, or as an opportunity for the gospel? If so, what could we do? Where is God in all this?



ACTIVITY

- Make your own Palm Cross. If you watch Calum's reflection for Palm Sunday within that video there is a guide for how to make a palm cross.
- Put it in a window in your house as a symbol of hope and love.



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Take **one hand** and look at:

- Your thumb – pray for your church community and family;
- Your first finger – pray for the NHS and those medical researchers looking for a vaccine;
- Your second finger – pray for the Government and all those making tough decisions;
- Your third finger – pray for those in care homes and working with the most vulnerable in our communities; and
- Little finger – pray for individuals known to you and yourself.

Each prayer focus for each thumb and finger could itself open up into prayer personally, locally, nationally, and globally.

Take **the other hand** and read out loud:

"As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience" (Colossians 3:12) and let your thumb and each finger represent one of these "clothes" we are to put on:

- Thumb – compassion
- First finger – kindness
- Second finger – humility
- Third finger – meekness
- Little finger – patience

When you pray, **put your hands together**, and let the "clothing" of one hand touch the people and places in the other, and see what God does.



MUSIC SUGGESTIONS

You might wish to head to youtube or put a CD on and listen to **Ride on, Ride on in Majesty, All Glory, Laud and Honor or My Lighthouse.**



CLOSING PRAYERS

**Jesus our King,
give us ears to hear your voice,
and minds and bodies
ready to do what you ask.
Help us to go out
singing Hosannas to you.
Amen.**

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