**Morning Praise @ Home 24th March 2024**

**Palm Sunday**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** 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 Zechariah 9: 9 – 12 Luke 19: 28 – 40

**Reflection from Ruth**

This morning we read of Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem - Palm Sunday. This was to be the climax of his story, of his public career, of his vocation. He knew well enough what lay ahead, and had set his face to go and meet it head on. He couldn’t stop announcing the kingdom, but that announcement could only come true if he now embodied in himself the things he’d been talking about. The living God was at work to heal and save, and the forces of evil and death were massed to oppose him, like Pharaoh and the armies of Egypt trying to prevent the Israelites from leaving. But this was to be the moment of God’s new Exodus, God’s great Passover, and nothing could stop Jesus going ahead to celebrate it.

And yet…the grumblers are still there; some Pharisees, going along with the crowd, suddenly become anxious about what will happen if the authorities in Jerusalem think for a minute that there’s a messianic demonstration going on. Jesus knows, and Luke knows, and we as his readers know, what awaits the Master when he gets to the city. From Jesus’ point of view, this is why there is such a celebration in the first place: it is appropriate precisely because he is coming to bring God’s salvation, God’s great Exodus, through his own Passover action on the cross. Had the crowds known this, they would have been puzzled and distressed, as indeed they soon will be.

 As we arrive at Jerusalem with Jesus, the question presses upon us. Are we going along for the trip in the hope that Jesus will fulfil some of our hopes and desires? Are we ready to sing a psalm of praise, but only as long as Jesus seems to be doing what we want? The long and dusty pilgrim way of our lives gives most of us plenty of time to sort out our motives for following Jesus in the first place. Are we ready not only to spread our cloaks on the road in front of him, to do the showy and flamboyant thing, but also now to follow him into trouble, controversy, trial and death?

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ

known in the world? **We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by Tony**

**Loving God, give us joy in our hearts as we shout Hosanna, welcoming Jesus our King with palms, celebrating all that we hope for as the Easter story unfolds.**

**Then as the journey of Jesus turns towards Good Friday, help us know that you are with us when celebration turns to sadness, Give us the faith we need to follow you on the way to the cross, which leads to life. Amen.**

**Dear God, Thank you for sending your Son and paving the way for our lives to be set free through Jesus' death on the cross. Thank you for what this day stands for - the beginning of Holy Week, the start of the journey towards the power of the cross, the victory of the Resurrection, and the rich truth that Jesus truly is our King of Kings.**

"Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord..."

**We give you praise and honour for your ways are righteous and true. We give you worship for you are holy and just. We will declare that your love stands firm forever. For your loving kindness endures forever.**

**Thank you that your ways are far greater than our ways, your thoughts far deeper than our thoughts. Thank you that you had a plan to redeem. Thank you that you make all things new. Thank you that your face is towards the righteous, and you hear our prayers, and know our hearts. Help us to stay strong and true to you. Help us not to follow after the voice of the crowds, but to press in close to you, to hear your whispers, and seek after you alone.**

Father, Palm Sunday is here, and this past year has brought tumultuous times and flashes of fear that none of us have experienced in our lifetimes. The very real fallen state of our world and the frailty of life have been put front and centre in our lives in a visceral way. We look to you, Father, to guide us out of our fear and remind us of our Saviour. We do not need to be afraid. You have given us the wisdom we need to live each day of our lives to the full purpose You have designed for us to live.

Father, Palm Sunday is a reminder of the unexpected, yet [fully anticipated](https://www.ibelieve.com/faith/lenten-prayers-to-prepare-your-heart-for-easter.html), King of Kings. Jesus did not look like the Messiah Your people hoped for. The way He entered the Holy City of Jerusalem on that day, riding a young donkey as a significant sign of peace and fulfilment of prophecy, did not align with their expectations of a military conqueror. Much of our daily lives don’t align with our expectations, Father. So much of our lives don’t make sense.

This Palm Sunday, let us embrace the unexpected entrance of our Saviour, Jesus. He is Peace. Let us apply this incredible truth to our lives. Peace mattered to Jesus. He came to bring us Peace. He is peace. Father, how quickly we forget the Peace we possess in Christ! Remind us, minute by minute, as we navigate difficult days and trying times. Father, we need Peace to live life to the full, as Jesus died for us to live.

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

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,******Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be,

that you may live and work to his praise and glory,

and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**