**Morning Praise @ Home 13th April 2025**

**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 Luke 19: 28 – 42

### Reflection *FAITHFUL GOD AND FICKLE PEOPLE*

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Palm Sunday is the day when we remember Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem and the Old Testament prophecy fulfilled, ‘See your king is coming, riding on a donkey.’ Not a proud tall horse, the usual option for royalty, but a humble donkey for Jesus, but nonetheless, the expectation in that moment of triumphant entry was clear.

For Jesus’ followers, this was the day that they had been waiting for, the day that all of their learning and discipleship had been leading up to, the day when the rightful king of Jerusalem would be enthroned, and all around would know the truth of Jesus’ identity. It’s also a day which shines a discerning light on some of the dark realities of human nature.

CHEERING CROWDS AND EXPECTANT HEARTS

Ministers often visit local schools in the week before Easter to explore the Easter story with them, and the children ask the best questions. One year, a thoughtful 10-year-old asked me: ‘Why did the crowd shout for Jesus to be crucified, when on Palm Sunday they thought he was the king?’ Such a great question.

The crowds that shouted ‘hosanna’ may well have been the same ones who would soon be shouting ‘crucify’ and we can’t enjoy Palm Sunday without knowing what the days ahead will bring. We can’t watch the cheering crowds without knowing that soon it will all change; the adulation will become malice, and the cheering welcome will be replaced by angry violence.

A FICKLE CROWD

Many in the crowd didn’t really know who Jesus was. They were just caught up in the excitement — happy to shout hosanna if it looked hopeful that this one was the one — but some were just as happy to shout ‘crucify’ when the mood changed.

A few years ago, there was a harrowing story on the news of a young asylum seeker who was brutally attacked in Croydon. The news reports suggested that up to 30 people were involved in the attack, egged on by one another: they all joined in the violence.

Crowds can be dangerous. Interestingly, the term ‘mob’ comes from the Latin mobile vulgus, which means ‘fickle crowd.’ Crowds can be dangerous, and crowds can be fickle.

FICKLE DISCIPLES

From Judas’ pre-meditated betrayal to Peter’s moment of fear — ‘I don’t know the man you’re speaking of’ — the disciples too, are fickle in their response to Jesus.

The disciples were quick to express words of confident faith: Lord, I believe! I will follow you wherever you go. Though others fall away, I never will.

Confident faith — yet the words weren’t able to carry the truth that they intended. For they would fall away, all of them. When it was all going wrong, their confident faith would let them down.

The crowds were fickle, the disciples were fickle.

I’M FICKLE TOO

I’m also fickle in my response to Jesus. ‘I will offer up my life,’ I’m happy to sing, but some days I don’t manage to offer up a couple of minutes of prayer, and certainly not anything as comprehensive as my life.’

In Holy Week we’re invited to acknowledge the fragility and fickleness of our faith too. Like the crowd, like the disciples, we are fickle too.

GOD IS FAITHFUL

Holy Week points us again and again to a God who is faithful, who will continue to reach out to us in love, though our response to Him may be half-hearted and fickle.

As Jesus journeyed to the cross, he was surrounded by some of the worst characteristics of humanity; the greed of Judas, the arrogance of Peter, the cowardice of Pilate, and the jealousy of the High Priest. Yet he continued in complete obedience to his heavenly father, to fulfil his mission. ‘It is finished,’ he said.

The journey through Holy Week and towards Easter is a vital one to make every year. Every year we remember the same events, but every year God speaks to us differently through them. Every year there are new resonances and parallels in our own lives, new aspects that we hadn’t noticed before. As I look, each year, at the darkness of the human failure that surrounded Jesus, it encourages me about the depth of God’s grace, and the reality of his forgiveness, for them, and for me.

### And as we journey with Jesus through Holy Week each year, there’s always more to be known, more to be understood, of the price that was paid, the victory that was accomplished, the faithful love that conquered on the cross. Amen

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**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 Kari**

Lord, as we come together this Palm Sunday, help us to open our hearts to you and each other. Still our minds from all the worries that preoccupy us. Reconnect us to you, and to each other, so that we may radiate your love to others.

Take a deep breath in and breath out slowly. Feel the amazing and shared gift of life we have been given.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Thank you, Father, for taking care of us. Help us with our fear, our anxiety and our frustration. Aid those who are uncertain of the future; who are suffering from hunger, illness, loss, war, or natural disasters to bear their burdens. Strengthen us, to support all who are in need.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

God of wisdom, we pray for the leaders in our world. Guide their hearts and minds to have integrity as they make decisions. Inspire them and bless them with vision to move all nations towards unity and peace.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

Finally, we remember that day, when Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem on a donkey, and everyone waved palm leaves to celebrate the new King. Don’t let us forget, that we too can praise him, every day!

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