



PALM SUNDAY

A resource for praying at home



Note from Fr Toby

Holy Week begins today with Palm Sunday. This year, when we are away from our churches, we must keep Holy Week at home. The celebrations of these days are at the heart of our liturgical life – they remind us that Christ's death and passion do not just belong to a far distant past, but are a present reality, which is to shape our lives.

Praying by ourselves or with our families requires discipline. You may well find it much harder to keep praying without the support of your brothers and sisters. So here are some suggestions for praying at home:

- 1. Try to keep regular times of prayer. I'm going to try broadcasting the Mass, which will be offered at 9am. Please do join me for that if you can. You can see this on the parish Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Religious-Organization/Parish-of-Swindon-New-Town-508584622520122/> Or try praying on Saturday evening or Sunday morning when you would normally meet for Mass. We can pray together, even when we are apart. As Christians, we never pray alone, our prayers are accompanied by those of the angels and saints.*
- 2. If you have room to do this, try to have a space set aside for prayer. You might light candles and have a cross ready.*
- 3. Enrich your prayer with art and music. An excellent source of Christian art online is the Visual Commentary on Scripture. See <https://thevcs.org/>.*
- 4. Sing hymns out loud. Say the prayers aloud. Do not rush.*
- 5. Do not be anxious. Trust in God. Prayer is the work of the Holy Spirit praying in us – our role in prayer is secondary. Try passing a few minutes in silence, or listening to sacred music, before your time of prayer. Then simply ask Jesus, in the quiet of your heart, as his first disciples once did: "Lord, teach us how to pray". And trust that God will do the rest.*

Image on front cover is by Félix Louis Leullier (1811 – 1882).



THE INTRODUCTION

Light a candle and spend some time in silence if you can. If you have some greenery – even if you can't find palm or olive branches! – you might like to have it ready to hold.

Today we remember Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem. If you can, you might like to listen to Hosanna to the Son of David by David Weelkes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQ2JcN-tgI8>

Or you can say this chant:

Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. Hosanna in the highest.

Then read this introduction:

Since the beginning of Lent until now we have prepared our hearts by penance and charitable works. Today we herald with the whole Church the beginning of the celebration of our Lord's Paschal Mystery, that is to say, of his Passion and Resurrection. For it was to accomplish this mystery that he entered his own city of Jerusalem. Therefore, with all faith and devotion, let us commemorate the Lord's entry into the city for our salvation, following in his footsteps, so that, being made by his grace partakers of the Cross, we may have a share also in his Resurrection and in his life.

Holding up your greenery, say this prayer:

Increase the faith of those who place their hope in you, O God,
and graciously hear the prayers of those who call on you,
that we, who today hold high these branches
to hail Christ in his triumph,
may bear fruit for you by good works accomplished in him.
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

Then read the entrance Gospel:

Matthew 21.1-11.



(Christ's Entry into Jerusalem by Hippolyte Flandrin, 1842)

You might then sing (or read) this hymn:

ALL GLORY, LAUD, and honour
to thee, Redeemer, King,
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.

Thou art the King of Israel,
thou David's royal Son,
who in the Lord's name comest,
the King and Blessed one. *Refrain*

2. The company of angels
are praising thee on high,
and mortal men and all things
created make reply: Refrain:

4. To thee before thy passion
they sang their hymns of praise:
to thee now high exalted
our melody we raise: Refrain:

3. The people of the Hebrews
with palms before thee went:
our praise and prayer and anthems
before thee we present: Refrain:

5. Thy sorrow and thy triumph
grant us, O Christ, to share,
that to the holy city
together we may fare: Refrain:

Words: St Theodulph of Orleans (c.750–821)
translated by John Mason Neale (1818–1866)

Then say the Collect for Palm Sunday:

Almighty ever-living God, who as an example of humility for the human race to follow caused our Saviour to take flesh and submit to the Cross, graciously grant that we may heed his lesson of patient suffering and so merit a share in his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Read one or more of these readings:

(1) Isaiah 50.4-7; (2) the Psalm: Ps 22 (or Ps 21 in Catholic bibles) and (3) Philippians 2.6-11. For music settings of the Psalm see:

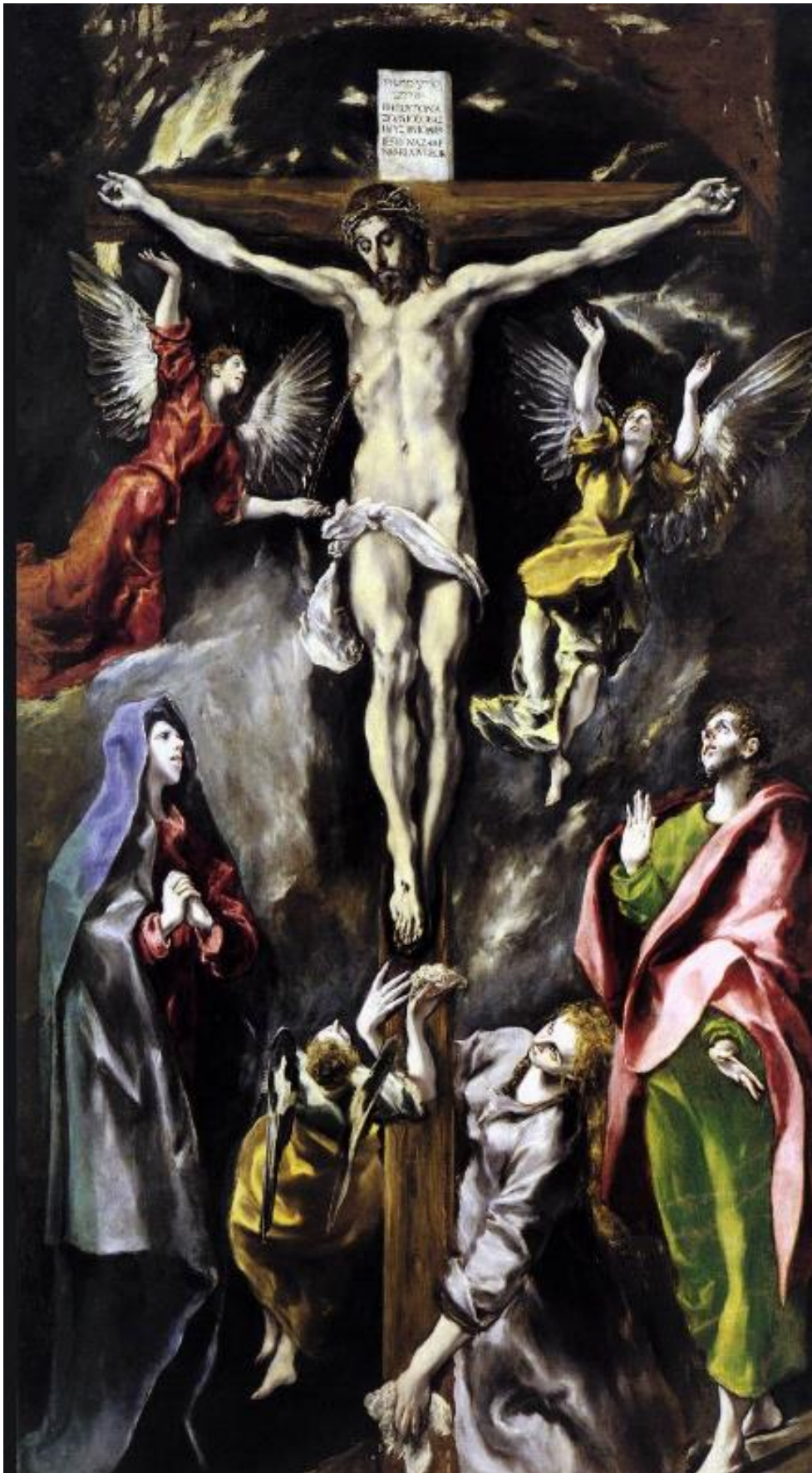
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdMyTfJz01A>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ih8Y9mH82UA>



*Images: the Agony in the Garden and the Crucifixion (overleaf),
both by El Greco (1541-1614).*

Then read Matthew's account of the Passion: Matthew 26.14 – 27.66.



Keep a period of silence after the reading, meditating on the Passion.

Then offer up your own intercessions. You might like to use or adapt these:

For Jonathan, our Bishop, for the Diocese of Bristol, for Bishop Viv and Bishop Lee – for all in positions of leadership in the Church. 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 in the darkness and agony of isolation, that they may find support and encouragement, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

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

For those who have died. That they may know Christ's love and mercy. Let us pray to Lord. Lord, have mercy.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Say the OUR FATHER.

To prepare yourself for the act of spiritual communion, you might like to sing or read this hymn:

My song is love unknown,
My Saviour's love to me;
Love to the loveless shown,
That they might lovely be.
O who am I,
That for my sake
My Lord should take
Frail flesh, and die?

2. He came from His blest throne
Salvation to bestow;
But men made strange, and none
The longed-for Christ would know:
But oh, my Friend,
My Friend indeed,
Who at my need
His life did spend.

3. Sometimes they strew His way,
And His sweet praises sing;
Resounding all the day
Hosannas to their King:
Then "Crucify!"
Is all their breath,
And for His death
They thirst and cry.

4. They rise and needs will have
My dear Lord made away;
A murderer they save,
The Prince of life they slay.
Yet cheerful He
To suffering goes,
That He His foes
From thence might free.

5. Here might I stay and sing,
No story so divine;
Never was love, dear King,
Never was grief like Thine.
This is my Friend,
In whose sweet praise
I all my days
Could gladly spend.

by Samuel Crossman

(Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMart4wXsI0>)

Then make your act of SPIRITUAL COMMUNION. Spend a moment meditating on Jesus' love for us, for his gift of the Holy Eucharist and of his Body, broken for us, and his most precious Blood, which was shed for us. Desiring to be united with Christ, then pray:

MY JESUS,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself
wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

Spend some time in silence, giving thanks, and then say:

Blessed, praised and adored be Jesus Christ on his throne of
glory in Heaven, and in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Amen.

Say this concluding prayer:

Almighty, ever-living God,
you gave our Saviour the command
to become man and undergo the cross
as an example of humility for all to follow.

We have the lessons of his sufferings:
give us also the fellowship of his resurrection.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

And then pray for God's blessing, saying:

The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil, and bring us to
everlasting life.

Amen.

Let us praise the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

