

## Isaiah 50.4-9a

This servant, who has been obviously been punished, is certainly aware of God's redemptive powers. The Lord God helps even the person who has been so far turned aside from him. For those who would sing the Lord's praises on his entrance, would be the same people who would scream for his blood later in the week. And the Lord loves each of these, just as he loves each of us. And he who vindicates us is near. The Lord's coming is indeed near, and just as we are praising his entrance to Jerusalem today, we must ever keep in mind that he knows what this entrance precedes. The repetition in this particular passage demonstrates the number of times that we turn from God and the number of times he forgives us. How important for us to hold onto that during the coming week.

## Saints & Heroes

### Blaze Away

In Welsh calendars 5th April is the day to celebrate a former soldier and celebrated saint, Derfel, patron of Landerfel in Gwynnedd, where there was a wooden statue of him, mounted on a horse. There was a legend that anyone who came to the statue on St Derfel's Day would be delivered out of Hell. This made a bundle of money, so Chancellor Cromwell decided that it might be profitable to have the statue transferred to London (nothing changes). The local people raised £40 as a bribe to stop this happening, but to no avail. It was still at Smithfield in 1538 when Queen Catherine of Aragon's confessor, John Forest, was burnt at the stake for denying Henry VIII's claim to be head of the Church in England, fulfilling the Welsh prophecy that the image could set a whole forest afire (forest/Forest, a pun, get it?).

## The Reception



'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest!' As we, with the people of Jerusalem, welcome Christ as Lord and Saviour, let us resolve that we will never reject him, as they so quickly did. Let us resolve as we welcome Christ anew into the city of our heart, so full of people we know and love, that we will remain faithful to his call and trust in his promises. We must always remember that we are just like those in the crowd waving branches. We too are influenced by those who wield political power, by our neighbours and by the mood of the crowd. We too are quick to let go of newfound resolve and easily make enthusiastic attachments. Let our welcome be one that comes from the depths of hearts and made with a steadfast and deliberate will, that in welcoming Christ we may also walk with him the way of the cross and find it none other than the way of life and peace.

### O Sing Unto the Lord

No procession on Palm Sunday would be complete without the singing of *All glory, laud and honour*. This is a translation by J.M. Neale of the Latin hymn, 'Gloria, laus et honor', attributed to St Theodulf who was bishop of Orleans. Theodulf was imprisoned in Angers in 818 and whilst there sang the hymn from his cell when the king of France, Louis I, was passing. The king forthwith ordered his release. The original version was much longer than that which we know today, but the words remain relevant as a hymn of glory from us to Christ as our redeemer. One of the omitted verses seems particularly quaint to modern ears 'Be thou, O Lord, the rider, And we the little ass; That to God's Holy City, Together we may pass'. The tune *St Theodulph*, is by a Polish composer, Melchior Teschner (1584-1635). The naming of the tune being an indication of the marriage of tune and words.

