



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 28 MARCH 2021**  
**PALM SUNDAY**

**COLLECT**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
who in your tender love towards the human race  
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ  
to take upon him our flesh  
and to suffer death upon the cross:  
grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility,  
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

**Psalm 118.1-2 & 19-end**

- 1 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; ♦  
his mercy endures for ever.
- 2 Let Israel now proclaim, ♦  
'His mercy endures for ever.'
- 19 Open to me the gates of righteousness, ♦  
that I may enter and give thanks to the Lord.
- 20 This is the gate of the Lord; ♦  
the righteous shall enter through it.
- 21 I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me ♦  
and have become my salvation.
- 22 The stone which the builders rejected ♦  
has become the chief cornerstone.
- 23 This is the Lord's doing, ♦  
and it is marvellous in our eyes.
- 24 This is the day that the Lord has made; ♦  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
- 25 Come, O Lord, and save us we pray. ♦  
Come, Lord, send us now prosperity.
- 26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; ♦

we bless you from the house of the Lord.

27 The Lord is God; he has given us light; ◆

link the pilgrims with cords

right to the horns of the altar.

28 You are my God and I will thank you; ◆

you are my God and I will exalt you.

29 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; ◆

his mercy endures for ever.

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### **Philippians 2.5-11**

5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of

God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, 7 but emptied himself,

taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, 8 he

humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. 9

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 so

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

### **Mark 11.1-11**

1 When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of

Olives, he sent two of his disciples 2 and said to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and

immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden; untie it and

bring it. 3 If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" just say this, "The Lord needs it and

will send it back here immediately." 4 They went away and found a colt tied near a door,

outside in the street. As they were untying it, 5 some of the bystanders said to them, "What are

you doing, untying the colt?" 6 They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to

take it. 7 Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. 8

Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had

cut in the fields. 9 Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting,

"Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! 10 Blessed is the coming

kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!" 11 Then he entered Jerusalem

and went into the temple; and when he had looked around at everything, as it was already late,

he went out to Bethany with the twelve.

### **Reflection – this week from Hannah**

Earlier this week, Angela Merkel apologised to the German people for changing her mind about an Easter lockdown. On the World at One (Radio 4), the presenter asked the question 'Is humility a sign of weakness or strength?' Strength! Strength! Why are you bothering to ask that?! I was yelling at the radio whilst making my sandwich. It seemed so obvious- why on earth would the question even be raised?

It was perhaps not a coincidence that moments before I had been reading the passages for Palm Sunday. Of course it seemed self-evident when looming large in my mind, and in the Church's year, is the image of the King who rides a donkey. Christ turned human understanding of power on its head. As the passage in Philippians reminds us, he chose a path that was radically different to everyone's expectations, archetypes and assumptions about how God incarnate would interact with us. Still today, it baffles us. Still today we ask the question about the nature of humility and what it means to live a reconciled life together having, as Paul puts it, the mindset of Christ.

As we enter Holy Week, we enter Jerusalem in the company of one who chose to be our servant, and was obedient to death- even that most humiliating of deaths in the Roman world, reserved for outcasts and scoundrels who were to be made an example of. As we journey together, we are invited once again to pray that the Spirit will continue to form us in the image of Christ, who shows us that, yes, humility is strength.

So back to Angela Merkel. Far from being a smug observer on the side-lines of a radio debate that, at first glance, didn't seem worth having; I am instead encouraged to recognise that because I/ we/ all of us are complicit in the perpetuating of unforgiveness and pride, we do still need to ask the question. God has given us the answer, and we know it in a cerebral sense, but in its practical outplaying we're still learning. Is humility a sign of weakness, or strength? Over the past year, many of us may have wrung our hands in despair at various times over the decisions made by those in power. We may have shouted our own responses at the radio or telly- That's plain wrong! That's not fair! Perhaps we find it difficult to be humble because we also find it difficult to forgive, and bitter experience has taught us that if we admit our mistakes there will be no fresh start. It's sadly a common human experience. Well, we all make mistakes, and we will all continue to make mistakes, but we have faith in a Gospel full of fresh starts. Therein lies the joy... and the challenge.

This Palm Sunday, as we once again recognise the nature of Christ- of the grit, the steeliness, the strength of a life of humility that is our example, may we pray for that same heart in our own lives. May we rejoice in the radical truth that God invites us to embrace humble ways and to forgive freely- just as we are forgiven. It is the work of reconciliation that joins in with the creative work of God who draws all things into the life of love. So that, as the ancient hymn puts it in its breath-taking finale:

'At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.'

Amen.