



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 24 MARCH 2024- 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, 19.24

- 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.

Isaiah 50.4-9a

The Servant's Humiliation and Vindication

The Lord GOD has given me

the tongue of a teacher,

that I may know how to sustain

the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens—

wakens my ear

to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord GOD has opened my ear,

and I was not rebellious,

I did not turn backwards.

I gave my back to those who struck me,

and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;

I did not hide my face

from insult and spitting.

The Lord GOD helps me;

therefore I have not been disgraced;

therefore I have set my face like flint,

and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?

Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?

Let them confront me.

It is the Lord GOD who helps me;

who will declare me guilty?

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from Mark, chapter 11, verses 1-11.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel and it is introduced with an Acclamation, as below:

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory.

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory.

I am the light of the world, says the Lord. Whoever follows me has the light of life.

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark, chapter 11, verses 1-11.

Glorify to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

When they were approaching Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples 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. If anyone says to you, "Why are you doing this?" just say this, "The Lord needs it and will send it back here immediately."' They went away and found a colt tied near a door, outside in the street. As they were untying it, some of the bystanders said to them, 'What are you doing, untying the colt?' They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it; and he sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut in the fields. Then those who went ahead and those who followed were shouting, 'Hosanna!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

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.

A Reflection from Hannah...

I'm not often in the car for long, but this week as I drove home from Welshpool I got to listen to a whole programme (yes, start to finish)... and, it was one of my favourites! *All in the Mind* often has some really interesting reports, and this edition included an article about the importance of hope. It visited a project in Northern Ireland which runs courses in schools teaching students about finding hope, living with hope and having hope in difficult times. There's lots to reflect on here- not least what the need for a course like this says about the mental health of our young people today, which we do know is very complex and in decline on aggregate. And young people, indeed all of us, have reasons to lose hope. With access to global media, the horrors of the world are writ large at all times; with underfunded services like education, national health and transport, we are battling against the tide to access what used to be basic infrastructure- bus services, hospital appointments... life is certainly more of a struggle.

A loss of hope is understandable to some extent- there is much to lament, and helplessness and hopelessness are known to be mindsets that put people at risk of diminished wellbeing. Helplessness at least was the very stuff of everyday life during the pandemic- and so there is a legacy there. But what's interesting is that researchers into resilience and mental health have found that hope is the key- it is the attitude that enables people to keep going when life is hard; and hope is also the essence of the Gospel. Perhaps we are made to be people of hope?

And hope is found in its fullness in the life of Christ. Palm Sunday gifts us a particular insight into what a life lived with dogged hope looks like. Even though Jesus knew what was to come, he didn't let the despair of Good Friday compromise the elation of Palm Sunday. He was able to dwell wholeheartedly in both- receiving the praise of those who spread their cloaks and waved their palms without letting the inevitable sadness that was to come cloud this moment. That's what the way of the cross means- yes, the journey may be agony at times and delight at others, but our underlying, underpinning, fundamental attitude, in good times and in bad, is one of hope. When we hold fast to our ultimate hope as participants in the eternal life of God who is love, we are able to both endure whatever may come, and to allow the blessings to sing out in the moment- which is exactly what happened on Palm Sunday as the crowds shouted 'Hosanna', in pure praise.