

LISTENING

Jesus enters Jerusalem

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!"

(Mark 11: 7-10, NRSV)

REFLECTING

It's a few weeks since Palm Sunday, but I hope you still know where your Palm Cross is. Get it out now, if you can, hold it, and feel the grain under your thumb. It's a physical reminder of praise. As we inhale and exhale our breath, let us breathe in God's grace, and breathe out our fears; breathe in the Spirit, and breathe out all that holds us apart. If you can't find your Palm Cross, next time you are in a garden, or walking in a park or down a country lane, look for a twig in leaf, a stem of grass to carry, and as you walk along, imagine you are in the crowd, following Jesus to Jerusalem.

It's a few weeks since all that hullabaloo – Jesus on a donkey and the crowd going wild, the people bursting out in spontaneous uproar, as when their favourite wins Olympic gold. There were people leaping about, dancing, waving banners and branches, ecstatic in expectation. It doesn't matter if you'd have been one of the leaders out front, or one of the timid band following on behind, it would have become one of those 'I was there' moments – one to tell the grandchildren.

But life isn't generally lived in such excitement. Our moments of praise to God for the glory of creation and salvation can occur in church, but just as often when we are under God's sky, like a flower turning its head towards the sun; or sometimes when we sing hymns in the shower.

Whenever and wherever, if we listen, we can hear God join in the singing. Haven't we all learnt most keenly in this last year, how much we need to express our worship in sound and song?

Be alert to unexpected moments of praise; give up waiting for the glory of the kingfisher, the aria of the nightingale. The song of God's voice is the song of the robin, the sparrow, the pigeon – 'life does not have to be perfect to be wonderful'.

Here, at midday, pause, ponder – where and how have I joined in the praise of God this morning? This afternoon, be on the lookout for ways to praise God in the trivial moments as well as the grand gestures of life'.

PSALM

- 1 Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament!
 - 2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing greatness!
 - 3 Praise him with trumpet sound;
praise him with lute and harp!
 - 4 Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!
 - 5 Praise him with clanging cymbals;
praise him with loud clashing cymbals!
 - 6 Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD!
- (Psalm 150:1-6, NRSV)

**Glory to the Father and to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now
And shall be for ever.
Amen.**

PRAYING

Praiseworthy God, unbounded yet abiding within us,
Pulse of creation and heartbeat of compassion,
Tend the seasons of our lives, we pray.
Open the windows of our souls to welcome in your Spirit,
And open our eyes and hands to the needs of your broken and grieving world. In Jesus name,
Amen.