

Reflection and Prayers for Palm Sunday

**The Lord be with me,
and those who surround me in this world and the next**

Dear friends in Christ, during Lent we have been preparing by works of love and self-sacrifice for the celebration of our Lord's death and resurrection. Today we come together to begin this solemn celebration in union with the Church throughout the world. Christ enters his own city to complete his work as our Saviour, to suffer, to die, and to rise again. Let us go with him in faith and love, so that, united with him in his sufferings, we may share his risen life.

Blessing of the Palms

God our Saviour, whose Son Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as Messiah to suffer and to die; let these palms be for us signs of his victory and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. Amen.

Collect of the Day

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, Amen.

Reading Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke 19:28-40. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

²⁸ *After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.*

²⁹ When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" ³² So

those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. ³³ As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴ They said, “The Lord needs it.” ³⁵ Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!” ³⁹ Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, order your disciples to stop.” ⁴⁰ He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Reflection

This reading reminds me of the issues of celebrity culture. One moment we have people rising as popular stars in the media, and then once they get used the fame and adoration the knives come out and they are destroyed by the media that raised their profiles. And the media rub their hands with glee as their coffers are filled.

Jesus did not seek popular adoration, he often told those he healed to keep silent, not to tell others, and yet the good news of Jesus could not be hidden. For all his requests for secrecy, for all his slipping in and out of the towns and villages his popularity rose and rose. He became the Messiah of the populace. As he made his way into Jerusalem he was feted and lauded, here was someone who made a difference. Until the tables turned and he became the one to hate!

The reality is that of course Jesus WAS the MESSIAH. That he was the one who would and could make a difference not to just a few lives but to everyone.

During this pandemic, while we are sitting at home maybe it is time to

reflect on those around us. Who really makes a difference in our lives, and who just makes a big noise? Are you being supported by the people and the groups you expected? Or are some of them silent, do you feel invisible to the group you have given much of your time and energy?

Jesus' life was not given over to seeking fame or fortune, he was not so concerned with appearances but with hearts and souls. He did not act in order to make waves for the sake of it. No Jesus life was lived with integrity, he acted, spoke, healed and taught with the purpose of drawing people into a closer relationship with God. Pray to your Father, he taught, don't be focused on the rich in money, look to the rich in generosity and love. See the need of the people and respond to it.

Our local heroes are more like that – NHS staff, Carers, shop keepers, delivery drivers, farmers and fishing folk, garage people and emergency workers – none will earn fame and fortune, yet they are doing the work of the Father, and He knows and loves them.

Prayers using one of the readings set today Philipians 2.5-11

⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
Heavenly Father, we pray to you today for all the people for whom Christ came to save, for the whole world, those healthy and well, those ill and in pain, those celebrating and those mourning, help me to see them all with your eyes

*Lord in your mercy **Hear our Prayer***

⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

*Jesus our way and truth and life, help us to be your servants in this time of extraordinary need, help us to hear your voice in the people around us and to be good neighbours Lord in your mercy **Hear our Prayer***

And being found in human form, ⁸he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross.

Lord we pray for those who are facing death, those who are accompanying loved ones on their last days in this life. Help us to remain confident in your promises and to trust in your love

Lord in your mercy **Hear our Prayer**

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, we call upon your name for our families and community, for our nation and our world. We trust in your name that you will hear our prayers

Lord in your mercy **Hear our Prayer**

Merciful father: accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Praise God who loves us. Praise God who cares.

Lord Jesus Christ, you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant, and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation. Give us the mind to follow you and to proclaim you as Lord and King to the glory of God the Father and may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**