

Introduction to the Season

It is still uncertain when Christians first began to make an annual (as opposed to a weekly) memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ. This *Pascha* (a word derived indirectly from *pesach*, Hebrew 'Passover') was at first a night-long vigil, followed by the celebration of the Eucharist at cock-crow, and all the great themes of redemption were included within it: incarnation, suffering, death, resurrection, glorification. Over time, the *Pascha* developed into the articulated structure of Holy Week and Easter. Through participation in the whole sequence of services, the Christian shares in Christ's own journey, from the triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to the empty tomb on Easter morning. The procession with palms, which was already observed in Jerusalem in the fourth century, is accompanied by the reading or singing of the Passion Narrative, in which the whole story of the week is anticipated. Maundy Thursday (from *mandatum*, 'commandment', because of the use of John 13.34 in the Antiphon) contains a rich complex of themes: humble Christian service expressed through Christ's washing of his disciples' feet, the institution of the Eucharist, the perfection of Christ's loving obedience through the agony of Gethsemane.

After keeping vigil ('Could you not watch with me one hour?') Thursday passes into Good Friday with its two characteristic episodes. The veneration of the Cross is older; the sequence of meditations and music known as the Three Hours' Devotion was introduced into the Church of England in the nineteenth century. The first is now sometimes incorporated into the structure of the second. It is a widespread custom for there not to be a celebration of the Eucharist on Good Friday, but for the consecrated bread and wine remaining from the Maundy Thursday Eucharist to be given in communion. The church remains stripped of all decoration. It continues bare and empty through the following day, which is a day without a liturgy: there can be no adequate way of recalling the being dead of the Son of God, other than silence and desolation. But within the silence there grows a sense of peace and completion, and then rising excitement as the Easter Vigil draws near.

This solemn season preserves some of the oldest texts still in current use, and rehearses the deepest and most fundamental Christian memories. At the same time, the services and ceremonies of Holy Week have in the course of Christian history been the occasion of, or have actively encouraged, hostility towards the Jews. The '*Ioudaioi*' of St John's Gospel have all too easily been identified with 'the Jews' as a whole, or more specifically those Jews who were neighbours of a Christian church. This places a

double responsibility on those who lead the keeping of Holy Week today: to be faithful to the act of collective memory, but also to be sensitive to the ways in which an unreflecting use of traditional texts (like the Reproaches) can perpetuate a strain of Christian anti-Semitism.

The United Benefice of Holy Innocents and St. Mark South Norwood

*Sharing God's grace and love in our
community*

5th April 2020

Vicar: Mother Roxanne Hunte

Assistant Priest: Mother Susan Wheeler-Kiley

Palm Sunday (Commemoration of the Lord's entry into Jerusalem)

10.00am Joint Parish Mass (online)

President, Mother Roxanne

*Isaiah 50.4-9 * Psalm 31.9-16 * Philippians 2.5-11 * Matthew's
Passion Gospel*

NOTICES

Although the Churches are closed, please remember that you can still contact *Mother Roxanne on Tel: 020 8916 1830; Mobile 07472 66 23 23; email mtroxanne@gmail.com* She continues to be unavailable on Mondays; and *Mother Susan (07890 780572) on Fridays.*

Stewardship – in these times of Church closures, those of who have joined the Planned Giving Scheme via the envelopes /family purse system, may want to take this opportunity to switch to **Direct Debit or Standing Order.**

We would very much appreciate it.

Also, if you haven't been doing this already and are a UK taxpayer, who pays income tax or capital gains tax, we would be grateful if you would let us reclaim tax on your donations; this is a UK government scheme which will not cost you anything but allows us to increase your donation by .25p in each £ you give to Holy Innocents or St. Mark.

To request the Bank details for either church, please message Mother Roxanne via text, WhatsApp or email and she will provide the relevant information – Thank you very much to those who have already made the change.

Today, we enter Holy Week in anticipation of the joy of Easter, which we begin to celebrate next Sunday, Easter Day.

Together with today's 8am BCP Mass and 10am Common Worship, we will be uploading to the usual channels, the Stations of the Cross.

We hope to have them available from tomorrow Monday, 13th April for you to access, follow and meditate upon all week. Feel free to listen to all the 14 stations at once, or in sessions convenient to you. Have a blessed Holy Week.