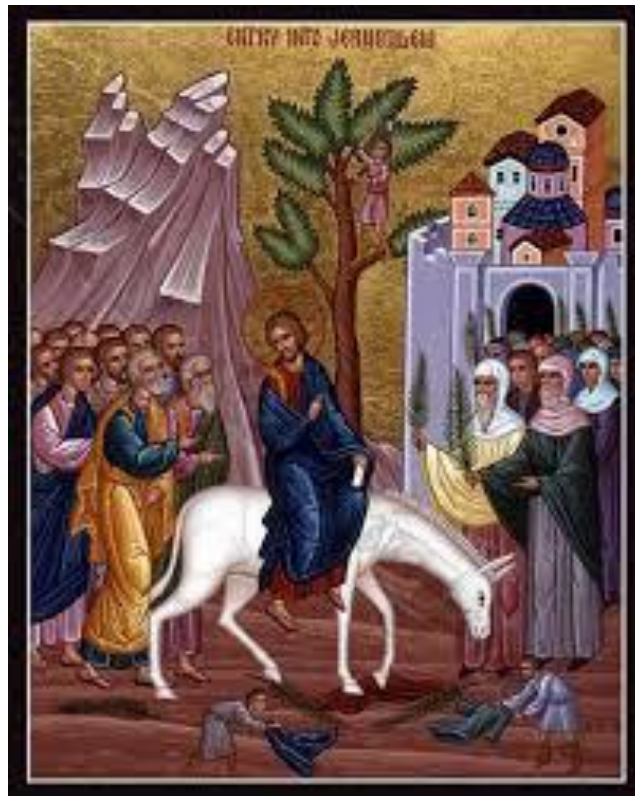




## Reflections & Prayers for Palm Sunday

28 March 2021



StJohnsAL5

[www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](http://www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk)

## Thought for Holy Week

In the Garden of Gethsemane, we read in Matthew 26.40 “Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, ‘So, could you not stay awake with me one hour?’” On this day our Lord Jesus Christ entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph but the path before him led to self-giving, suffering, and death. During this Holy Week, let us not fall asleep but spend a little time in prayer and meditation and Bible reading as we journey with our Saviour to the cross.

### Contents

Readings for this Sunday	p. 2-3
Reflection	p. 3-4
Prayers for the beginning of Holy Week	p. 4-6
Parish Prayers	p. 6-7
St John’s Lent Eco-challenge 2021	p. 7
Lent at Home	p. 8

### Readings for this Sunday

These are the readings for this Sunday which you may like to read in your bibles at home.

Isaiah 50.4-9a

Philippians 2.5-11

**Mark 11.1-11**

#### **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.

### *Reflection from Paula Gooder*

Palm Sunday is one of the most bittersweet moments in the Church’s calendar. On Palm Sunday we commemorate Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem when all the crowds accompanying him sang a Psalm of praise, waved branches and appeared to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem as king. After years of not recognising who Jesus was, of misunderstanding and conflict, it feels as though the crowd suddenly get it. They see Jesus riding on a donkey and remember prophecies like those in Zechariah 9.9 (‘Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey’) or maybe that Solomon had ridden to his coronation on a donkey (1 Kings 1.33). Whatever it was, the crowd finally seemed to understand who Jesus was and what he had come to do – and celebrated. Of course, we know – as Jesus did himself – that this is not the happy ending we might hope for. Almost the moment that Jesus set foot in Jerusalem, the crowd turned and melted away. Only a week later they were baying for his death.

One of the things that strikes me every year on Palm Sunday is how Jesus acts through all of this. We know that he knew his death was imminent, because he told the disciples about it on more than one occasion. He must have seen the crowd’s celebration and known how quickly they would change. A strong sense of foreboding hangs over this whole event; a sense that the worst is still to come. And yet, through it all Jesus persevered.

Quietly, authentically, generously, he went about his business as he always did: teaching the disciples; responding with love to people like the woman who anointed him with oil; holding his own against those who sought to trip him up with difficult questions.

By doing so he suggests to us how we might seek to live in hard times. The answer? One step at a time. Not letting the anxieties and stresses that lie all around us knock us off course; being who we are called to be quietly, authentically and generously. It may help to remember that even Jesus became overwhelmed with grief in the Garden of Gethsemane just before his arrest. We are not called to be unfeeling automatons but we see in Jesus through all of this – especially during his trial when the accusations flying around became more and more desperate – a still centre. Someone who listened more than he spoke. Someone who never stopped being truly who he was. This is the Jesus of Palm Sunday, the Jesus of Holy Week. This Jesus stands with us through all of this, knowing our pain, giving us comfort and loving us through it all.

### Prayers for the beginning of Holy Week

We stand with Christ in his suffering.  
For forgiveness for the many times we have denied Jesus,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For grace to seek out those habits of sin which mean  
spiritual death,  
and by prayer and self-discipline to overcome them,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For Christian people,  
that through the suffering of disunity  
there may grow a rich union in Christ,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who make laws, interpret them, and administer them,  
that our common life may be ordered in justice and mercy,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who still make Jerusalem a battleground,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who have the courage and honesty to work openly for justice and  
peace,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those in the darkness and agony of isolation,  
that they may find support and encouragement,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who, weighed down with hardship, failure, or sorrow,  
feel that God is far from them,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For those who are tempted to give up the way of the cross,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

That we, with those who have died in faith,  
may find mercy in the day of Christ,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

**Holy God,  
holy and strong,  
holy and immortal,**

**have mercy upon us.**

**The Collect for Palm Sunday**

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

**Parish Prayers for the week ahead**

**In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:**

Sunday	Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui
Monday	The Diocese of Bari – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Tuesday	The Diocese of Baringo – The Anglican Church of Kenya
Wednesday	The Diocese of Barrackpore – The (united) Church of North India
Thursday	The Diocese of Bath & Wells – The Church of England
Friday	The Diocese of Bathurst – The Anglican Church of Australia
Saturday	The Diocese of Bauchi – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

**In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:**

Sunday	Parish of Biggleswade (Deanery of Biggleswade)
Monday	Parish of Blunham (Deanery of Biggleswade)
Tuesday	Parish of Caldecote, All Saints (Deanery of Biggleswade)
Wednesday	New Worshipping Communities
Thursday	Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Executive Committee
Friday	The Diocesan Schools Team
Saturday	Parish of Cockayne Hatley (Deanery of Biggleswade)

**For the homes and families in:**

Sunday	Heath Close, High Elms
Monday	High Firs Crescent, Highfield Avenue
Tuesday	Kingcroft Road, Kings Court
Wednesday	All those living outside the Parish
Thursday	Knowle Drive, Leycroft Way
Friday	Lilac Way, Limbrick Road
Saturday	Linwood Road, Loire Mews

**The Sick:**

Amy, Claire, Sue, Christine, Hermione, Karen, Chris, Sophie and all whose names are entered on our St Luke's Cell Prayer List.

**For the recently deceased:**

Janet Carruthers

**On their year's mind:**

Brian Meade, Betty Catton

**St John's Lent Eco-challenge 2021, 17th February – 3rd April**

The Eco-church team have devised a set of challenges for Lent. These are all connected with our theme of 'Caring for God's World'. There is a different topic each week, and you are encouraged to do two or three challenges each week, at the level that suits you. Several challenges have two levels. We include opportunities to appreciate the natural world, simple things you can do to save energy and water, ideas about recycling, and suggestions on how to reduce your 'carbon footprint'. We have included stars for you to tick/colour when you complete a challenge!

## LENT WEEK 6: Holy Week (29<sup>th</sup> March – 3<sup>rd</sup> April)

- Go for a walk and see what has changed since Ash Wednesday. Find a place to sit outdoors for 5-10 minutes of silence, and listen to the sounds
- Collect used postage stamps, greetings cards and / or candles to recycle at Church
- Make / buy an Easter card or present from recycled materials
- Investigate ethical banking/investment that has a positive impact on the environment



### A reminder... of this phone service:

**Daily Hope** – dial 0800 804 8044 for prayer, reflection, music and worship services from the Church of England. A weekly service is available from 9 am every Sunday.

### Church at home:

We are delighted to produce each week these printed papers. If you would prefer not to receive these papers each week, please let Julie in the parish office know. If you are aware of others in the parish who would also value the opportunity to worship at home in this way, do please contact a member of the Ministry team or Julie (Parish Office Tel: 01582 712776).