

# The Five Alive Praying Together on a Sunday



## Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020 – Palm Sunday

*You may like to light a candle while you pray as a visible symbol of Jesus being present with you.*

The Lord is with us.

That this evening may be holy, good and peaceful,  
let us pray with one heart and mind.

*Keep a moment of quiet*

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,  
so may your mercy come down upon us to cleanse our hearts  
and set us free to sing your praise now and for ever. Amen.

### **Canticle: Saviour of the World**

- 1 Jesus, Saviour of the world,  
    come to us in your mercy: ◇  
    we look to you to save and help us.
  
- 2 By your cross and your life laid down,  
    you set your people free: ◇  
    we look to you to save and help us.

- 3 When they were ready to perish, you saved your disciples: ◇  
we look to you to come to our help.
- 4 In the greatness of your mercy, loose us from our chains, ◇  
forgive the sins of all your people.
- 5 Make yourself known as our Saviour and mighty deliverer; ◇  
save and help us that we may praise you.
- 6 Come now and dwell with us, Lord Christ Jesus: ◇  
hear our prayer and be with us always.
- 7 And when you come in your glory: ◇  
make us to be one with you  
and to share the life of your kingdom.

### **Gospel Reading: Matthew 21: 1-11**

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, “The Lord needs them.” And he will send them immediately.’ This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

‘Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and

he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

‘Hosanna to the Son of David!

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

Hosanna in the highest heaven!’

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, ‘Who is this?’ The crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.’

## **Reflection**

A bookworm as a child, one of my early favourite books was “If Jesus Came to My House” by Joan Gale Thomas. The book had been handed down to me; it was first published in 1924! It is a tale of a young boy who thinks of Jesus being his same age and same height coming to his house, and what he would show him and what toys he’d offer him to play with. Its language seems very out-dated today, yet that idea of what would I do if Jesus came to my house or my street is one which has some relevance to Palm Sunday.

How would I, how would you, go out to greet Jesus if you heard he had arrived in your street? With no time to prepare, and caught up in the air of expectation and excitement, what would you take out to welcome him? A scarf to wave may-be? Something with which to make a noise? Would you think to cut some greenery or strew flowers on the road before him?

The symbolism of what the crowds did as Jesus rode into Jerusalem should not be lost on us. Palms linked to Psalm 118: 25 and the cry Hosanna – “save now”, which from being a prayer in the psalm changes in the gospels to becomes a statement of confidence that God will hear and save the people. Cloaks - many of the crowd probably didn't have a second cloak but they spread theirs on the road anyway.

Yet, for all the shouting and acclamation of Jesus as King and Saviour, the crowd melted away. The gospel writers give little explanation about why – perhaps it is not really needed. Jesus on his own in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus standing alone before Pilate, and Jesus' lonely walk to Golgotha amid the baying crowds gains significance as Holy Week begins.

This year churches do not resound with the singing of “Ride on, ride on in majesty! Hark all the tribes hosanna cry” nor “All glory, laud and honour; to thee, Redeemer King”, yet, the self-sacrificial service of so many across this nation and across the world does sing through and high above the tragic effects of Covid-19, and indeed other tragedies across the world, of war and natural disasters.

The service of front-line staff and volunteers. The care of neighbour. The sacrificial giving of foodstuffs and money. The peacemakers in places of greatest tension and conflict. The relief agencies working with those who are displaced and living in overcrowded and unsanitary camps.

These speak loudly of compassion overriding all that besets human flourishing; of peace never submitting to hatred; of hope never being overcome by desperation. These acts demonstrate the cost of following Christ through the dark hours (the Garden of Gethsemane), the pain (Good Friday) and of sharing the work Jesus came to do to bring his Kingdom near.

How shall we proclaim Christ as King? How during this Holy Week shall we walk beside Christ?

From our self-isolation at home – will it be the phone call we make? From our once daily walk – perhaps in the conversation with another from a safe social distance? From our day job – the help offered to a colleague? From the prayer we offer on behalf of the frightened and sick and bereaved? From the donation we make to a relief fund?

How shall our lives and hearts proclaim Christ as King and Saviour? How shall we continue his work to bring his Kingdom near?

*Keep a moment of quiet to reflect before praying.*

## **Prayers**

*Prepared by John Allsop (Fladbury)*

Blessed is the King who comes in the Name of the Lord!

Lord Jesus Christ, who on this day received the homage of those who hailed you as their King, accept our humble praises and grant us your grace, that we who confess you with our lips may also love you in our hearts and serve you in our lives.

We pray for the Church worldwide, for our diocese, for Bishops John and Martin, for all who serve you in prayer and deed. We pray for the Peace of Jerusalem and the People of the Land of the Holy One.

We pray for all those who are suffering because of the coronavirus, may they know your healing power. When we are afraid for ourselves and our loved ones, give us your strength and courage. When we feel alone and isolated, reassure us with a sense of your

presence. Give wisdom to those in authority and may our community work together for the good of all. We give thanks for those who care for others and ask you to bless them in all they do. We ask this in the name of Jesus, healer and physician.

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Dear Father of life, dear God of justice, enable a change of heart in mankind and the powers-that-be on the issue of climate change. Bring into our hearts compassion for the poor and vulnerable who are threatened by the change in climate, so that at the end, humanity will be edified and you, God, will be glorified.

Father, if we are truly to be the Body of Christ help us to learn through the Cross what it means to love and to serve, and to persevere in our loving and serving.

If our homes and neighbourhoods and work-places are to display and respond to your values, then make us more fervent in prayer, more courageous in self-discipline and, above all, more loving in outreach.

Father, through the life-giving death of Jesus, may the dying turn to you and know your merciful love; may the grieving be comforted, and may we all, with those who have gone before, one day share the eternal joy of your heaven. We pray through Jesus. Amen.

“As rain on meadows newly mown, so shall he send his influence  
down: his grace on fainting souls distils, like heavenly dew on  
thirsty hills.”

## **(Alternative) Collect for Palm Sunday**

True and humble King,  
hailed by the crowd as Messiah:  
grant us the faith to know and love you,  
that we may be found beside you  
on the way of the cross,  
which is the path of glory.  
Amen.

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory  
are yours now and for ever.  
Amen.

### **Hymn:**

*Ctrl + click link to play hymn provided free by RSCM*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8gy1ZCcwBQ&list=WL&index=2&t=>

[0s](#)

O sacred head, surrounded  
by crown of piercing thorn!  
bleeding head, so wounded,  
so shamed and put to scorn!  
Death's pallid hue comes o'er thee,  
the glow of life decays;  
yet angel-hosts adore thee,  
and tremble as they gaze.

Thy comeliness and vigour  
is withered up and gone,  
and in thy wasted figure  
I see death drawing on.

O agony and dying!  
O love to sinners free!  
Jesu, all grace supplying,  
turn thou thy face on me.

In this thy bitter passion,  
good Shepherd, think on me  
with thy most sweet compassion,  
unworthy though I be:  
beneath thy cross abiding  
for ever would I rest,  
in thy dear love confiding,  
and with thy presence blest.

*Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676)*  
*trans. Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877)*

May the Father,  
who so loved the world that he gave his only Son,  
bring us by faith to his eternal life.

May Christ,  
who accepted the cup of sacrifice  
in obedience to the Father's will,  
keep us steadfast as we walk with him the way of his cross.

May the Spirit,  
who strengthens us to suffer with Christ  
that we may share his glory,  
set our minds on life and peace.  
Amen.