

PALM SUNDAY
5th April 2020
Rev Jack Bateson

As a bonus for Palm Sunday I have included some adult puzzles at the end, to help keep you occupied and remind you of Holy Week. I know it is not the same as having the Archbishop visiting us, but I hope it does get the grey matter moving!

May God bless you
Rev Jack

READINGS

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord GOD has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.
Morning by morning he wakens—
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.
The Lord GOD has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.
I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.

The Lord GOD helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.
It is the Lord GOD who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

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 fulfill 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.”

THE COLLECT

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.**

SERMON

I'd like to start be talking about grapefruit – because that's obviously what one does at a time of national crisis!!

In all seriousness, when I was at university I shared a house with my best friend. He was running low on cash, so signed up for a drug trial with Pfizer's who were based in Sandwich at the time. The trial was well paid and sorted out most of his money worries.

Three months before he started he received a letter about the trial telling him not to eat grapefruit as it would interfere with the drugs being tested. Now, he didn't like grapefruit, and he would never choose to eat it, but as soon as he was told not to, all he wanted to do was eat grapefruit!!

In these strange times we have been confined to our homes, and we must resist the temptation to go out unnecessarily, even though for most, there will be the strong urge to do so. I have always been a keen walker, and spring is my favourite time of year. The urge to go out is especially strong at the moment. But I must exercise self-discipline!!

It doesn't help when we read the story of Palm Sunday. We hear of Jesus journey up to the Mount of Olives, then the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Now this journey up to Jerusalem was massive, the vertical range from Jericho to Jerusalem is a tough 3,800 feet, through a harsh desert environment devoid of vegetation. Ahead of the Passover there would have been many pilgrims heading for Jerusalem and the route from Jericho was the toughest. Arriving in Jerusalem, to see vegetation again, is triumph enough ...

But the crowds who came to welcome Jesus weren't doing this just because he'd made the journey – this was more than a Holy “Tough Mudder”. His entry into the Holy City was a reminder of Judas Maccabaeus who, having defeated the Syrian's nearly two centuries earlier, entered Jerusalem, cleansed and re-dedicated God's temple.

The Gospels have a lot to say about Jesus. However only two Gospels mention His birth and His growing up. The four Gospels predominantly focus on just three years of His life – the last three.

Sometimes when reading the Gospels it can be hard to work out at what stage of His life Jesus is at. But when we get to the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, celebrated today on Palm Sunday, we suddenly have it laid out in front of us. Each Gospel has this story and from now on we have only a week more of Jesus' life.

Well over a third of each of the Gospels concentrates on this last week before His death on the cross – the day of His death takes more space collectively in the Gospels than the accounts of His birth. The focus of Jesus' story seems to be His last week and his death!!

Until this point Jesus has been recognised as a great teacher, a healer of the sick, a worker of miracles. He has travelled around and has lived with friends. On occasions He has been recognised as the Lord, the Saviour of the world, but in the main He is still known as a prophet – as someone speaking forth God's word.

Until now when some people have recognised that Jesus is the Son of God He has told them to be keep silent – but now on coming to Jerusalem He chooses to enter in a flamboyant way. I say He chooses because it seems that he had already arranged the use of a donkey – it was all planned. All the disciples had to do was to collect it.

And so He gets on a donkey, big deal you may think. OK, not everyone could afford a donkey, but it's not that big a thing. Perhaps not, but having a crowd taking off their coats and ripping palm branches to lay down over the donkey and the road certainly was. It was the way in

which the liberators were greeted when they overthrew the Syrian's and re-entered Jerusalem in 141BC.

To spread palm leaves and cloaks on the ground was to welcome a king and saviour. And for those who knew their Old Testament they would have realised that to ride in on a donkey fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 – a King was coming!

You may be asking what were the crowds doing there? Well in a few days time it was to be the Feast of Passover – a time when many Jews would have assembled in Jerusalem to celebrate their escape from Egypt. Jerusalem would have been full of visitors. It was their biggest festival.

The crowd did more than just throw their coats and branches in front of Jesus, they started 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!!”* Hosanna! Save us! They were shouting words reserved for a king, for a Saviour, for a Messiah, the words of Psalm 118:26.

Unlike in the past Jesus did not stop them. Until now during His life if anyone recognised Him as the Son of God He often told them to be quiet, but now in his last week He allows, and seemingly encourages, them to recognise Him as their king, as their saviour.

Yet still some did not recognise Him as a Saviour, some people continued to either not know of Him, or saw Him merely as a prophet, as someone who spoke good

teachings. My question for us all today is : who do you see Jesus as? A prophet, a good teacher, as Lord, Saviour?

Perhaps to help us consider who He is, spend some time during this unusual Holy Week reading of His last week within one of the Gospels : Matthew,¹ Mark,² Luke³ and John⁴. It should take less than the time to watch an episode of a Soap and I can guarantee greater storylines in the Gospels.

You'll be able to find His last week because it starts with this story. As you read through and try to work out what Jesus sacrifice means to you, ask yourself these questions :

* Have we domesticated and trivialised our Christian faith?

* Have we simplified the enormity of Jesus sacrifice to a comforting religious experience – a warm fuzzy feeling on a Sunday?

* Is going to church on a Sunday just another habit, like always doing our food shop at the same time of the week? (or at the moment, *wanting* to do our food shop at the usual time!)

¹ From today's Gospel reading

² From Mark 11:1 ... this is the shortest and most direct account.

³ From Luke 19:28

⁴ From John 12:12 ... this is the longest version.

* Has your experience of your Christian faith become like wetting yourself in a dark pair of trousers??? It gives you a warm feeling inside, but nobody notices!! 😊

If it has, then this Easter as we follow Jesus into Jerusalem and watch His story unfold, pray that we may appreciate the enormity of Christ's sacrifice – and ask the Son of God to re-invigorate our faith, that we may reach out to those we know and shout ... *“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!!”*

I should have been going into our schools this week to celebrate Palm Sunday and Easter with them, and to say my farewells. Instead, I am sitting here, wondering what happens next! So, to lighten the mood, here is a song which we will undoubtedly have sung in the schools this week!! It goes along to the tune of *Drunken Sailor*, so if like me you are a fan of folk and shanty music, it should trip off the tongue well. A rendition can be found on YouTube :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNmGFN8SYuw>

A HYMN : We Have A King Who Rides A Donkey

By: Fred Kaan

We have a king who rides a donkey,
and his name is Jesus:
Jesus the king is risen
early in the morning.

Trees are waving a royal welcome
for the king called Jesus:
Jesus the king is risen
early in the morning.

We have a king who cares for people,
and his name is Jesus:
Jesus the king is risen
early in the morning.

A loaf and a cup upon the table,
bread-and-wine is Jesus:
Jesus the king is risen
early in the morning.

We have a king with a bowl and towel,
servant-king is Jesus:
Jesus the king is risen
early in the morning.

What shall we do with our life this morning?
Give it up in service!
Jesus the king is risen
early in the morning.

Name:

ON THE ROAD TO EASTER WORD SEARCH



- | | | |
|------------|---------------|--------------|
| Ash | Holy Week | Palm Branch |
| Wednesday | Holy Thursday | Forty Days |
| Sacrifice | Good Friday | Jesus |
| Almsgiving | Holy Saturday | Passover |
| Prayer | Easter | Foot Washing |
| Fasting | Palm Sunday | Resurrection |
| Lent | Purple | Love |



© 2014 · ManyLittleBlessings.com | CatholicPrintablesOnline.com

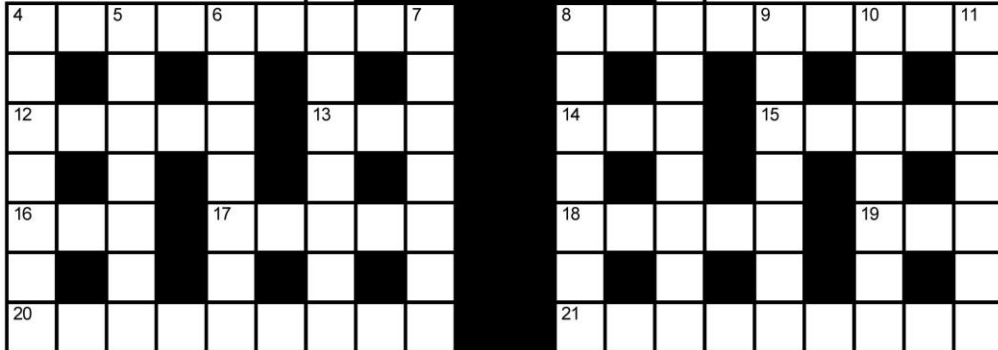
Bible Crossword X

Across

Down

- 1 Donkey (3)
- 2 Jesus' Father (3)
- 4 One of the twelve (9)

- 1 One of God's messengers (5,2,3,4)
- 3 1940s archaeological find (4,3,7)



- 8 Didn't believe in resurrection (9)
- 12 One of David's warriors (5)
- 13 First word of the Lord's Prayer (3)
- 14 New Testament name for Noah (3)
- 15 Wish harm upon (5)
- 16 Hole in the ground (3)
- 17 Adversary (5)
- 18 Savour (5)
- 19 First woman (3)
- 20 Mother of John the Baptist (9)
- 21 Family of priests (9)
- 22 Third son of Jacob (4)
- 23 Hates (8)
- 26 Assurances (8)
- 30 Endured pain (8)
- 31 Return from the dead (4)
- 32 Intercessor (8)
- 35 Decorating (8)
- 39 Old Testament book of the Bible (4)
- 40 The prince of Rosh, Mesech and Tubal (3)
- 42 A wise insect (3)
- 44 Dwelling place of kings (6)
- 45 Make bigger (8)

- 4 Tread down (7)
- 5 Father of Jonah (7)
- 6 Very salty water bordering Israel (4,3)
- 7 Defensive structures (11)
- 8 Refuges (11)
- 9 Dirty (7)
- 10 Devout (7)
- 11 Pieces of money (7)
- 24 Used to listen (3)
- 25 Used to see (3)
- 26 Positions (5)
- 27 Made available (7)
- 28 Snake (7)
- 29 Destroyed along with Gomorrah (5)
- 33 Finish (3)
- 34 Possess (3)
- 35 King of the Amalekites (4)
- 36 Last letter of the Greek alphabet (5)
- 37 Almost sacrificed by Abraham (5)
- 38 Present (4)
- 41 Unfasten (4)
- 43 Fish traps (4)

<http://biblepuzzles.org.uk>

... and for those who prefer a bit of colouring!!

