

Parish of Central Exeter  
Palm Sunday  
2 April 2023

**Tears.**

Welcome everyone.

**Opening Prayer from Orthodox Sunday Vespers**

From palms and branches,  
from one divine feast to another,  
let us make haste, we who believe,  
to reverence Christ's passion,  
that mystery of salvation.  
Let us see him suffer  
willingly for us.

In thanksgiving let us sing him  
a song such as we should:  
Lord, source of mercy  
And harbour of salvation,  
glory to you!

**Gathering Hymn**

'Ride on, ride on, in majesty'. Words on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tkB1F9zLVo>

**Call to Reconciliation**

We sing, we wave our branches, we shout 'Hosanna.'  
Then, we turn away, to go back to our old ways,  
our old lives, our old sins.  
But God is in the business of granting forgiveness  
and filling us with new life.

Let us confess to the One who comes to fill us with grace.



## **Prayer of Confession**

With eager hearts and open hands, Holy One,  
we welcome Jesus,  
until he refuses the power we offer him,  
choosing to become our servant.

We pick up the faith we had laid on the ground before him,  
and put it back on the shelf where it belongs.  
Our pride keeps us from being able to follow him  
all the way to Calvary.

Hosanna, Steadfast God, save us!  
Help us to let our fears, our doubts, our faithlessness  
slip from our lives to fall at your feet,  
so we may stand with our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ,  
who comes in your name,  
in your glory,  
in your grace to save us.

*Silence is kept*

## **Assurance of Pardon**

Tell the daughters of despair,  
proclaim it to the sons of sadness:

Christ has come to save us!  
Hosanna!  
We will give our thanks to God,  
who comes to bring us grace, hope, life.  
Hosanna in the highest. Amen!

*(written by Thom Shuman, and posted on Lectionary Liturgies)*

## **Collect for Palm Sunday**

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



## **Worship music**

Before we start our period of reading and reflection, we hear The Trisagion – this is a hymn or chant of praise sung normally as part of an Orthodox service just before the reading of the Gospel. The music in this version has been composed by the precentor of the Convent Festival Choir of Saint Elisabeth, Minsk, Belarus, who is also a nun at the convent, where it was been filmed on Palm Sunday 2020. (We have used this before)

Holy God, Holy [and] Mighty, Holy [and] Immortal, have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy [and] Mighty, Holy [and] Immortal, Have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy [and] Mighty, Holy [and] Immortal, Have mercy on us.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever  
and to the ages of ages. Amen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfKAytOy00s>

## **Readings and prayers – a time for (quiet) reflection.**

### **Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King Luke 19: 28-44**

<sup>28</sup> After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. <sup>29</sup> As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, <sup>30</sup> “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. <sup>31</sup> If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

<sup>32</sup> Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. <sup>33</sup> As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

<sup>34</sup> They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

<sup>35</sup> They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. <sup>36</sup> As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

<sup>37</sup> When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

<sup>38</sup> “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!”<sup>[b]</sup>

“Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

<sup>39</sup> Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

<sup>40</sup> “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

<sup>41</sup> As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it <sup>42</sup> and said, “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. <sup>43</sup> The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. <sup>44</sup> They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”



### **Prayer from India**

Jesus, King of the universe;  
ride on in humble majesty,  
ride on through conflict and debate,  
ride on through sweaty prayer and betrayal of friends,  
ride on through mockery and unjust condemnation,  
ride on through cruel suffering and ignoble death,  
ride on to the empty tomb and your rising in triumph,  
ride on to raise up your Church, a new body for your service,  
ride on, King Jesus, to renew the whole earth in your image;  
in compassion come to help us.

### **Reflection**

In Luke’s account of Jesus’ entry to Jerusalem as he came down from the Mount of Olives with the disciples joyfully praising God Jesus stopped.

“As Jesus came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.” *Luke 19:41-42*

In John 11 Jesus wept at the grave of his friend Lazarus. He wept with the pain and loss of bereavement. Now as he approached the holy city, the place

chosen as the centre for worship and faith, he paused and wept. Tears of sadness at the destruction that would come; tears perhaps of frustration at the lack of insight and discernment from the religious leaders; tears possibly for himself and his close friends aware as he is that he would leave them soon. He cried out with a call for 'the things that make for peace.' We are all too aware of the lack of peace, of stability, of fulfilled lives within our own city, country and across the world. This past year we have continued to see cities destroyed through conflict and disasters.

We pause to lament the suffering.

### **Two short prayers**

Jesus came to Benares  
as he does to Mecca  
and to Jerusalem and Rome.

In each place he  
raises his hand in peace.  
And in each place he  
is crucified again.

*(Words of an anonymous  
Asian poet inspired by  
Alphonso's painting 'Christ at  
Benares')*



Lord, I remember how you wept over Jerusalem, your holy city,  
because her people did not know how to make peace.  
Teach us in our towns and cities the things that belong to our peace.  
*(UK: prayer of a woman working in a multi-cultural area)*

The next mention of tears in Luke's account of the passion come at the end of the scene where Peter has followed the arrested Jesus but at a distance into the courtyard of the High Priest. Here, by a fire, he sat among a group including a servant-girl and other men. Three times he is challenged to be a follower of Jesus and three times he denied it.

'At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he



had said to him, “Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.’ *Luke 22:60b-62*

The third time Luke wrote about tears is during the long slow walk to Golgotha. The Roman soldiers have just forced Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross for Jesus.

‘A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. <sup>28</sup> But Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. <sup>29</sup> For the days are surely coming when they will say, “Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.” <sup>30</sup> Then they will begin to say to the mountains, “Fall on us”; and to the hills, “Cover us.” <sup>31</sup> For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?’ *Luke 23:27-31*

Whether these women were professional mourners weeping to follow the expectations of the culture or genuine women grief stricken at this cruel death of a popular teacher and healer, Jesus stopped and spoke to them. As John Carden commented in *Procession of Prayers* ‘Jesus bids them mourn, not for him, nor merely out of custom, but on account of those forces of evil which have brought him to this point on his road, and which unless recognized and repented of, will continue to bedevil the lives of successive generations of human beings.’

## **We pray**

Lord Jesus Christ,

you told the women of Jerusalem not to weep for you  
but to weep for themselves.

Be with women who suffer violence in their homes:  
as they weep for their sons caught up in violence.

Be with women and children trapped in prostitution and poverty.

Be with the women who live in domestic violence,  
who have learnt not to weep for their own pains,  
who have suffered so long they are numb.

Strengthen your Church in its care and support

of all who are in pain.  
Help us to be sensitive and caring,  
for you are the Lord who suffers and serves.

*Papua New Guinea*

### **Hosanna to the Son of David**

This is a Palm Sunday song from India. It is sung in Hindi, but the words are fairly obvious!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ky1ai6Yvxq0>

### **Creed**

A cry of faith in the midst of suffering

I believe, although everything  
hides you from my faith.  
I believe, although everything shouts; No! to me...  
I believe, although everything may seem to die.  
I believe, although I no longer would wish to live,  
because I have founded my life  
on a sincere word,  
on the word of a Friend,  
on the word of God.

I believe, although I feel alone in pain.  
I believe, although I see people hating.  
I believe, although I see children weep,  
because I have learnt with certainty  
that he comes to meet us  
in the hardest hours,  
with his love and his light.  
I believe, but increase my faith.

*From Livro de Cantos (Porte Alegre, Brazil, 1977) All Year Round (British Council of Churches 1987) (Job 23, Psalm 77, Jeremiah 15:15-21, Mark 9:24)*

## **Worship Song**

‘Meekness and Majesty’ by Graham Kendrick. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1l5NSvGo2I>

## **Intercessions**

Jesus, you set your face towards Jerusalem  
and walked alongside those who suffer.  
Be our vision,  
that we too may walk the way of compassion  
and extend a hand to those we meet.

Lord, hear our prayer,  
**and in your love, answer.**

Lord, you stopped to heal the sick  
and tend to those broken in body, mind or spirit.  
Be our vision,  
that we too may be a source of healing to all in need of your grace.

Lord, hear our prayer,  
**and in your love, answer.**

Jesus, you said,  
“The first shall be last and the last first.”  
Be our vision,  
that we too may work towards your realm –  
when the marginalized and oppressed will be raised up  
and know that they are indeed beloved children of the Holy.

Lord, hear our prayer,  
**and in your love, answer.**

Jesus, you took the time to pray and to be silent.  
Be our vision,



that through our prayers, meditation and reflection  
we may draw closer to you and find our way on this journey of faith.

Lord, hear our prayer,  
**and in your love, answer.**

Lord, you entered Jerusalem with peace in your heart.  
Be our vision,  
that we too can live as people of peace  
in the face of the world's many conflicts.  
May we hold your vision of justice and peace ever before us.

Lord, hear our prayer,  
**and in your love, answer.**

Bless us, O Blessed One,  
as we enter into the days ahead of us.  
We will need your power and presence to sustain us  
as we move through these difficult days together.  
Spirit of Love and Life, stay close.

These and all the prayers of our hearts we offer in faith, in the name of Jesus.

*(Adapted liberally from a prayer written by Annabel Shilson-Thomas (UK). Posted  
on RevGalBlogPals. )*

### **Short Reflective Gregorian Chant**

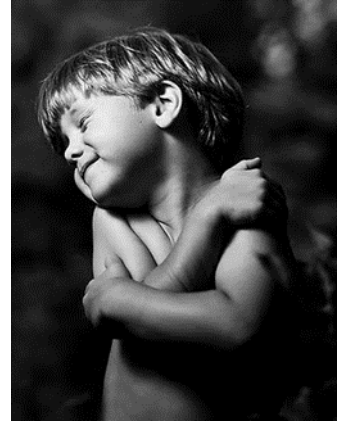
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xTXigoGnbKU>

## **The Peace**

If alone, smile and hug yourself (God does). If otherwise, share the Peace as appropriate.

## **A short Spiritual Communion**

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', even when we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.



Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

O God,  
help me to trust you,  
help me to know that you are with me,  
help me to believe that nothing  
can separate me from your love  
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **An offertory prayer**

*We may not be in church, but we can still offer ourselves and our talents to God.*

Blessed are you, God and creator of the universe,  
as we offer you our activities, thanksgivings and our life.  
We present ourselves, and our world, as we are and as you can make us,  
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours,  
and of your own do we give you. Blessed be God for ever.

*As we prepare for communion you might like to listen to St Davids's choir singing 'This joyful Eastertide'*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFPPum6CdNc&list=PLgBLixTy9an6PsLU8VmWzdVSVMNzUGSIW&index=15>

*Because there is no Breaking and Sharing  
we can have only Spiritual Communion  
with Christ. I'm sure you can find a way to  
use a few minutes of silence or  
conversation to enjoy this, and make it a  
sacramental moment.*



*Giving thanks for Christ's death and resurrection you may wish to say*

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits you have given me,  
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.  
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

### **Post Communion Collect**

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.

### **Commission and Benediction**

And now we lay down the palm branches.  
And with them we lay down our belief  
that there is another way for you to be God.

As the last echo of the final alleluia fades,  
so does our hope that this journey can end  
in any other way.

The week stretches ahead  
glory-less  
and pain-full

Whether we walk with all faith or none  
we look towards the cross,  
knowing it is both the most human  
and most divine  
of all journeys

travel the road with courage,  
with love,  
and with the uneasy peace that is the gift of faith  
into this holiest of weeks.

Amen.

*(written by Cheryl Lawrie and posted on [hold this space]. )*

### **Closing Music**

All Glory, laud and Honour', sung here by the St Michael's Singers. Words are on the screen.

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

