

**Sunday 24 March 2024**

# **Palm Sunday**

**(and Sixth Sunday of Lent)**



**Sermon** © The Revd Robin Wilding.

**Liturgy and prayers of intercession** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,  
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

## The Welcome Liturgy of the palms

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**All Amen.**

The Lord be with you,

**All and also with you.**

**HYMN 1 All glory laud and honour** [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, during Lent we have been preparing by works of love and self-sacrifice for the celebration of our Lord's death and resurrection. Today we come together to begin this solemn celebration in union with the Church throughout the world. Christ enters his own city to complete his work as our Saviour, to suffer, to die, and to rise again. Let us go with him in faith and love, so that, united with him in his sufferings, we may share his risen life.

**Everyone holds up palms or branches while this prayer is said:**

God our Saviour,

whose Son Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as Messiah to suffer and to die;

let these palms be for us signs of his victory

and grant that we who bear them in his name

may ever hail him as our King,

and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life;

who is alive and reigns now and for ever.

**All Amen.**

## The Palm Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

**All Glory to you, O Lord.**

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, un-tying the colt?' They told them what Jesus had said; and they allowed them to take it. 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. 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!' Jesus then 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. *Mark 11:1-11*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ.**

## The Procession

So let us go forth, praising Jesus our Messiah.

**HYMN 2 Hail thee festival day** [\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

## The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

**All Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All And also with you.**

## The Preparation

**All Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion, and confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour  
in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
We are truly sorry  
and repent of all our sins.  
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who died for us,  
forgive us all that is past  
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life  
to the glory of your name.  
Amen.**

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All Amen.**

Is it usual to omit the Gloria during Lent.

## 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.

**All Amen.**

## First reading

A reading from the book of the Prophet Isaiah

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? All of them will wear out like a garment; the moth will eat them up.

*Isaiah 50:4–9a*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Philippians

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. *Philippians 2:1-11*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 3 Make way! Make way!**

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.' Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.' But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' For he realised that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up

the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, 'Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?' They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, 'The King of the Jews.' And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!' In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.' Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!' *Mark 15:1-39*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

Jesus enters Jerusalem proclaimed as King—but what sort of King were the people expecting and looking for? A King to defeat the Romans, a rebel leader? I believe that's who Judas expected and tried to force Jesus' hand, and note that even Peter tried to defend Jesus by sword at his arrest. A King to reestablish Israel's Kingdom—a King for politics and for temporary and temporal success but hadn't the people failed at this before, have they not learnt their lesson? A King that will let us get on with our lives in safety and not have to change—hmm that's going to disappoint. Who is our King?

### 1. The King who cries

The entry into Jerusalem—from the east and on a donkey—not via the west gate in pomp (some suggestion that this usual route for the Romans was used the same day—Maybe Pilate, maybe Herod with their usual pomp; note the contrast). Jesus fulfils prophecy of Zechariah.

In the midst of the noise and celebration, palm leaves and hosannas, Jesus weeps over the city. This time not over the distress brokenness causes but more over the stubborn self blindness that refuses to listen.

Jesus enters a city that will turn on him—led by fear of riot, fear of loss of position and influence, fear of Caesar but not fear of God.

What fears are keeping you from following fully?

### 2. The King who cleanses

Some would have Jesus being threatening and angry here. Jesus is more outraged and acting on it. The moneylenders are prevented from plying their trade in the Temple (the Law declares against usury!) and he drives the animals out.

But why 'outrage'? The animals are there for sacrifice surely—but the Law is about people taking the best of their blessings and bringing them to God—personal—not bringing money and buying a substitute. The sacrifice is diminished, depersonalised. The ritual becomes merely that. And the Temple courts are for people to draw near to God not as a market-place, profit and loss. It's for *prayer*.

But this not only challenges the pockets of the merchants but also the pockets and the authority of the high priestly family and the Sadducees.

'With what shall I come before the Lord?' (Micah 6:6–8).

### 3. The King who heals

And there in the cleansed Temple courts Jesus acts in healing power. Now openly in front of the rulers and the gathered crowds those broken by illness, indeed those who can come no closer to God than this because of their physical illness (a picture



by God within the Law of our distance from him because of our spiritual brokenness and illness) are freed and can enter fully in. The result is excitement—hosannas and noise and kerfuffle and children underfoot.

Those who tolerated money changers and merchants complain loudly about excited children praising God.

What holds us from truly knowing the living God – what wounds and failures shame us?

Finally, our King is the one who is willing to give himself totally for the sake of his people, to be humbled (the Humble King), to be tortured, to die for the sake of those who will follow and find in Him the King who saves to the uttermost. No-one else can do this. He surrenders power and sacrifices himself for people like you and me, the weak the needy the clever the able all are faced with the challenge—what will you do about this King who calls you to follow him?

## The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
the source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?

**All We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**All This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,**

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**Amen.**

## Prayers of intercession

We stand with Christ in his suffering.

For forgiveness for the many times we have denied Jesus,  
let us pray to the Lord.

**All 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.

**All 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.

**All 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.

**All Lord, have mercy.**

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

**All Lord, have mercy.**

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

**All 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.

**All 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.

**All Lord, have mercy.**

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

**All 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.

**All Lord, have mercy.**

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

## **The peace**

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 4 King of Kings: majesty**

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below:

## **The Dismissal**

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,  
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;  
and the blessing of God the Almighty:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
be with you now and remain with you always.

**All Amen.**

**HYMN 5 The King is among us**

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All In the name of Christ.  
Amen.**

# The Liturgy of the Sacrament

## Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**All We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and just,  
our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For as the time of his passion and resurrection draws near  
the whole world is called to acknowledge his hidden majesty.

The power of the life-giving cross  
reveals the judgement that has come upon the world  
and the triumph of Christ crucified.

He is the victim who dies no more,  
the Lamb once slain, who lives for ever,  
our advocate in heaven to plead our cause,  
exalting us there to join with angels and archangels,  
for ever praising you and saying:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;  
and as we obey his command,  
send your Holy Spirit,  
that broken bread and wine outpoured  
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.

Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:

Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,  
we proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All Christ has died.**  
**Christ is risen.**  
**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,  
help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

**All Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All**     **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.**

## **Breaking of the Bread**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All**     **Though we are many, we are one body,  
because we all share in one bread.**

**All**     **Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ  
which he gave for you,  
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,  
and feed on him in your hearts  
by faith with thanksgiving.

**All** We do not presume  
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,  
trusting in our own righteousness,  
but in your manifold and great mercies.  
We are not worthy  
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.  
But you are the same Lord  
whose nature is always to have mercy.  
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,  
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ  
and to drink his blood,  
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body  
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,  
and that we may evermore dwell in him,  
and he in us.  
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

### **Prayer after Communion**

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.

**All** Amen

**All** Almighty God,  
we thank you for feeding us  
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.  
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies  
to be a living sacrifice.  
Send us out in the power of your Spirit  
to live and work  
to your praise and glory.  
Amen.