



The Liturgy of Palm Sunday Commemoration of the Lord's Entry into Jerusalem

29th April 2026

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father +
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you.

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.

God of all time,
as we prepare to worship you today and this week,
help us to call to mind these events in Jesus' life
so that we can see their significance for our present lives
and for the future you are preparing for all creation.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

The Palm Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (Ch.19)

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

29 When they were approaching Jerusalem and had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" 32 So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 They said, "The Lord needs it." 35 Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. 36 As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. 37 As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, 38 saying,

"Blessed is the king
who comes in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven,
and glory in the highest heaven!"

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

This is the word of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

HYMN

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
Hark! all the tribes hosanna cry;
O Saviour meek, pursue thy road
with palms and scattered garments strowed

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
The angel-squadrons of the sky
look down with sad and wondering eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
O Christ, thy triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sin

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
Thy last and fiercest strife is nigh;
the Father on his sapphire throne
expects his own anointed Son.

Ride on! ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
bow thy meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O God, thy power, and reign.

Confession

Let us pray for a closer union with Christ in his suffering and in his glory.

Loving God,
you rode a donkey and came in peace,
humbled yourself and gave yourself for us.
We confess our lack of humility.
As you entered Jerusalem,
the crowds shouted, "Hosanna: Save us now!"
On Good Friday they shouted, "Crucify!"
We confess our praise is often empty.
We sing Hosanna but cry Crucify.
As the crowd laid their palms in front of you
you took the way of God: you took no glory for yourself.
We confess that we want to be accepted and take the easy way.
We do not stay true to your will.
Forgive us, Lord, and help us to follow in the way of obedience. Amen.

The Collect

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. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word First Reading Isaiah 50 4-9a

The Servant's Humiliation and Vindication

⁴The 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.

⁵ The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backward.
⁶ 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.

⁷ 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;

⁸ he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?

Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?

Let them confront me.

⁹ It is the Lord God who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Second Reading Philippians 2. 5-11

Imitating Christ's Humility

⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

⁷ but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸ he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

HYMN

At the name of Jesus
every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him
King of Glory now.
'Tis the Father's pleasure
we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning
was the mighty Word:

Humbled for a season,
to receive a name
from the lips of sinners
unto whom he came,
faithfully he bore it
spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious
when from death he passed.

All creation name him,
with love as strong as death,
but with awe and wonder,
and with bated breath;
he is God the Saviour,
he is Christ the Lord,
ever to be worshipped,
trusted and adored.

At his voice creation
sprang at once to sight,
all the angel faces
all the hosts of light,
thrones and dominations,
stars upon their way,
all the heavenly orders
in their great array.

Bore it up triumphant
with its human light,
through all ranks of
creatures
to the central height,
to the throne of Godhead,
to the Father's breast;
filled it with the glory
of that perfect rest.

In your hearts enthrone
him;
there let him subdue
all that is not holy,
all that is not true:
crown him as your captain
in temptation's hour;
let his will enfold you
in its light and power.

Truly, this Lord Jesus
shall return again,
with his Father's glory,
with his angel train;
for all wreaths of empire
meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him
King of Glory

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Christ humbled himself and became obedient unto death,
even death on a cross.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name.

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What will you give me if I betray him to you?' They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, "The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples."' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve;* and while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.' And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, 'Surely not I, Lord?' He answered, 'The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.' Judas, who betrayed him, said, 'Surely not I, Rabbi?' He replied, 'You have said so.'

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave

it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the* covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them, 'You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered."

But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.' Peter said to him, 'Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you.' Jesus said to him, 'Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.' Peter said to him, 'Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.' And so said all the disciples.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to



be grieved and agitated. Then he said to them, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me.' And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want.' 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? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; * the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.' Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.'

While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.' At once he came up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed him. Jesus said to him, 'Friend, do what you are here to do.' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?' At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.



This is the Passion of the Lord.

The events we read about from this Sunday until next are some of the most dramatic and theological important of the entire scriptural narrative. They are recorded in depth in all four gospels, in John's gospel, eight of the twenty-one chapters are devoted to this event. The drama of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem which we recall this Sunday is a painful combination of the courage of Jesus – entering a place where there is violent hostility and doing so in such a public and prophetic way, and the joy of the crowd who shout Hosanna (Lord save!). Much of this is lost to us but those witnessing this event would make an immediate connection to the scripture:

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O Daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King comes to you; He is uncompromisingly just and having salvation triumphant and victorious, patient, meek, lowly, and riding on a donkey, upon a colt, the foal of a donkey. (Zechariah 9.9 Amp).

This Sunday marks the beginning of a week in which we 'walk' with Christ. It is all too easy to jump from this Sunday to Easter Day – 'Hosanna' to 'Christ arose' – with little attention to Jesus' suffering and death – in between there was 'Crucify, crucify! If we observe the Triduum (the three days from sunset on Thursday to sunset on Easter Day), the period during which we mark Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection), this will help us; Maundy Thursday, Good Friday the bleakness of Easter Saturday until the burst of joy at the Vigil in the evening – and then the great Alleluia of Easter Day.

Worship on Palm Sunday and at the other Holy Week services, is an invitation for us to think of ourselves as participants in a kind of dramatic re-enactment of the events. This is why we will carry palms and leafy branches and process, make that walk with Jesus symbolically whilst we sing. This is why we wash feet, strip the church of decoration, venerate the cross, gather in the dark to light the Easter candle from a new fire and break the darkness with its light.

I have often found that people become embarrassed about participating in worship – we have become all grown up and stuffy, we don't want to look silly. Yet I recall the account of how King David, when the Ark is returned to Jerusalem, joined the procession and 'danced before the Lord with all his might'. His wife, looking on from the palace window, was embarrassed on his account and despised him, and it goes on to say that she was 'barren all her days' (2 Samuel 6). There is something significant perhaps in those words. In churches where there are young children the idea of running around with branches and singing is no problem – even better if there is a donkey to add to the joy. Perhaps that adds colour to Jesus' words that "unless you change and become as little children, you will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven".

During my time at Exeter Cathedral, we most usually had a donkey as the Donkey Sanctuary is quite near. We would start our walk in the shopping precinct – looking very colourful with the Cathedral choir and lots of people. We had to 'pick up' the donkey when we came onto the Cathedral green for the donkey was not permitted in the shopping precinct (for Health and Safety reasons!). We entered the Cathedral, the donkey leading us in. We followed throwing our branches onto the floor of the long nave. I was not alone in finding it profoundly moving.

Intercessions

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,
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,
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.

Eternal God,
whose word silences the shouts of the mighty:
Quiet within us every voice but your own.
Speak to us through the suffering and death of Jesus Christ
that, by the power of your Holy Spirit,
we may receive grace to show Christ's love
in lives given to your service. Amen.

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

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

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

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen.

HYMN

Refrain:

*All glory, laud, and honor
to thee, Redeemer, King!
to whom the lips of children
made sweet hosannas ring.*

The people of the Hebrews
with palms before thee went;
our praise and prayer and anthems
before thee we present. Refrain

Thou art the King of Israel,
thou David's royal Son,
who in the Lord's Name comest,
the King and Blessed One. Refrain

To thee before thy passion
they sang their hymns of praise;
to thee, now high exalted,
our melody we raise. Refrain

The company of angels
are praising thee on high;
and mortal men and all things
created make reply. Refrain

Thou didst accept their praises;
accept the prayers we bring,
who in all good delightest,
Thou good and gracious king. Refrain