

**'Dorset South & West Written Service, Sunday 10th April 2022.  
'Willow Sunday '. Prepared by Revd Jean Quick.**

**Call to Worship.** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!  
Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt,  
the foal of a donkey. Zechariah 9:9

**STF 265 Ride on Ride on in Majesty**

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
Hark, all the tribes 'Hosanna!' cry;  
your humble beast pursues its road  
with palms and scattered garments strowed.

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

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

Ride on, ride on in majesty!  
Your 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 your meek head to mortal pain,  
then take, O God, your power, and reign.

Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868)

**Prayers of Adoration and Confession**

written by Rev John Paarlberg, a retired Church of Scotland minister.  
Humble and riding on a donkey,  
we greet you;  
Acclaimed by crowds and caroled by children,  
we cheer you;  
moving from the peace of the countryside to the corridors of power,  
We salute you: Christ our Lord.  
You are giving the beast of burden  
a new dignity;  
you are giving majesty  
a new face;  
you are giving those who long for redemption  
A new song to sing.  
With them, with heart and voice, we shout:  
Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! **Amen**

O Lord, who on this day entered the rebellious city that later rejected you:  
we confess that our wills are as rebellious as Jerusalem's,  
that our faith is often more show than substance,  
that our hearts are in need of cleansing.  
Have mercy on us, son of David, Saviour of our lives.  
Help us to lay at your feet all that we have and all that we are, trusting you  
to forgive what is sinful, to heal what is broken,  
to welcome our praises, and to receive us as your own. **Amen**

### **STF 326 Jesus comes with all his Grace**

Jesus comes with all his grace,  
comes to save a fallen race:  
object of our glorious hope,  
Jesus comes to lift us up.  
Alleluia!

Let the living stones cry out;  
let the seed of Abram shout;  
praise we all our lowly King,  
give him thanks, rejoice, and sing.  
Alleluia!

He has our salvation wrought,  
he our captive souls has bought,  
he has reconciled to God,  
he has washed us in his blood.  
Alleluia!

We are now his lawful right,  
walk as children of the light;  
we shall soon obtain the grace,  
pure in heart, to see his face.  
Alleluia!

We shall gain our calling's prize;  
after God we all shall rise,  
filled with joy, and love, and peace,  
perfected in holiness.  
Alleluia!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

### **Gospel Reading : Luke 19:28-40. Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem.**

After he had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.  
When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, 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. If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" just say this: "The Lord needs it." ' So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, 'Why are you untying the colt?' They said, 'The Lord needs it.' Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. 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, saying,  
'Blessed is the king  
who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Peace in heaven,  
and glory in the highest heaven!'  
Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.' He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.'

### **Reflection**

What does Palm Sunday mean to you?

What stands out for you in the familiar passage of scripture as you read the triumphal entry story this year? Especially as you consider the events that are unfolding in our world at this time?

Covid restrictions are lifting but the virus is still taking its toll. The war in Ukraine rages on and there are so many displaced persons. The horrors of the unprecedented attacks from Russia unfolding on our television screens every day.  
Then our internal concerns as a nation about the escalating costs of living on every front.

So what does Palm Sunday have to say to the world and the national events we are currently living through?

One strong concern for me every time we come to reflect on this important part of our Christian faith is this. Note how quickly the cries of hosanna turn to crucify!

The fickleness of human nature understates the problem.

So easily we are swayed from one thing to another.

One newspaper reporter claimed that as news of the pandemic was waning so we turned our attention to the war between Russia and the Ukraine. That's a bit harsh and difficult to hear or give any credence too. Except, how long do we actually focus on and really engage with the current problems in our world, before they become yesterday's news?

Looking at the gospel reading this stood out for me this year. The crowds greeted Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. We read the people were putting down their cloaks onto the road to make a path. My instinct is, isn't this a rather wasteful act? People need clean good clothes! So why toss them down for a donkey to trample on?

People are fleeing the Ukraine with barely the clothes on their backs and we read of the Dorset council is having to dispose of tons of inappropriate clothes 'donated' to the cause!

Concerning the scripture Laying down of clothes of course there has to be some symbolic reason behind this and the full meaning perhaps has been lost in time. However, the essential message must be, that the people welcoming Jesus held nothing back. No old clothes, no that will be good enough mentality. They were so jubilant they gave up everything to welcome their Messiah.

What about us are we prepared to stay with Jesus through this Holy Week and to hold nothing back as we reflect on the events leading up to Good Friday? Towards Easter and beyond, in the light of what will be happening all around us? What will be the symbolic cloak that we lay down as we welcome Jesus on Palm Sunday and follow him through Holy Week and try to respond in prayer and action to the crises unfolding in our world?

In the Ukraine Palm Sunday is known as Willow Sunday. Pussy Willow is the actual branch, but I can't help thinking at this time with everything happening in our world of the weeping willow.

Since few palm trees grow in their country Ukrainians long ago substituted willows for them.

After Palm Sunday services, it was customary for Ukrainians exiting church to gently tap each other with their blessed pussy willow branches. This custom, known as "Boze Rany" ("God's Wounds") was done to imitate the scourging of Jesus by His captors on Holy Friday. But the tapping of friends with the pussy willow branches was actually a wish for good health, wealth and happiness. That is because the tapping was usually accompanied by the phrase: "Be as big as the willow, healthy as water, rich as the earth".

The blessed willow branches were then taken home. Some were planted. If they took root, it meant the hope that many good things would come to the family that year. Most of the blessed pussy willow branches were placed in front of, behind or above holy pictures in the home.

If you do get given a palm branch cross, what will you do with it? Keep it for yourself or use it to bless others as the Ukrainian Christians do with their willow branches.

Perhaps rather than keeping it in your Bible or hymn book place it somewhere where it will prompt you to pray and act so that all may be, "as big as the willow, healthy as water, rich as the earth". No matter what that might cost you as you follow in the steps of our sacrificial Lord Jesus Christ.

### **Prayers for others:**

Loving God, your Son Jesus Christ, as he entered Jerusalem, wept.

Today, we weep over Ukraine.

We weep for those uprooted from their homes and lives.

We weep for those cowering in basements.

We weep for those who have witnessed death and destruction on their streets.

We weep for those separated from parents, from children, from spouses and siblings.

We are amazed at the resilience of people seeking to comfort those in need and so we pray for Governments opening up borders so that Ukrainians can have safe passage.

We pray for churches and individuals providing food, clothing and shelter.

We pray for medical workers ensuring that shattered bodies are put back together again.

We pray for ordinary Russians demonstrating and voicing their disapproval of the military actions in Ukraine.

May the Holy Spirit give us the willpower to turn our tears into action also.

May we, through our words, prayers and example pursue the things that make for a just peace in the world today and especially in Ukraine.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Gracious God,

We know that your love is infinite and that you care about all areas of our life.  
In this time of economic insecurity, help us to trust that all of our security is in you.  
Keep us mindful that you always have and always will provide for our needs.  
Apart from you we can do nothing.

Merciful God,

We ask that you give our leaders the wisdom to guide our nation and the world  
out of the current economic crisis.

Help us to protect the poor and all those who are struggling during this difficult time.

Provide for their needs and give them hope.

Open new opportunities for them and furnish the resources they need to live with dignity.

Encourage those who have enough to share essential resources with those who lack the necessities of  
life, and to do so with humble, grateful and loving hearts.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Healing and caring Lord God, we pray for all who are sick and suffering. We mention those known  
personally too us .....

We recall their specific needs and ask for your strength and guidance in their needs.

The pandemic restrictions are lifting but the virus still rages on. We pray for all still suffering with this  
virus. We think of all involved in care giving, in research to eradicate this sickness and for ourselves to  
play our part, to make the world a safe healthy environment for all.

**Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We take a moment to offer our own prayers for others and our concerns to God and when you are  
ready... We say **the Lord's Prayer. Our Father.....**

**STF 276 lift high the cross.**

*Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim  
till all the world adore his sacred name.*

Follow the path on which our Captain trod,  
our King victorious, Christ the Son of God:

Each new-born soldier of the Crucified  
bears on their brow the seal of him who died:

Led on their way by this triumphant sign,  
the hosts of God in conquering ranks combine:

From farthest regions let them homage bring,  
and on his cross adore their Saviour King:

O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,  
as thou hast promised, draw the world to thee:

Set up thy throne, that earth's despair may cease  
beneath the shadow of its healing peace:

Michael Robert Newbolt (1874-1956)  
and George William Kitchin (1827-1912)

Merciful God, as we enter Holy week, turn our hearts again to Jerusalem, and to the life, death, and  
resurrection of Jesus Christ. Stir up within us the gift of faith that we may not only praise him with our  
lips, but may follow him in the way of the cross. **Amen**