

Dorset South & West. Written Service.
Sunday 13 April 2025. Palm Sunday.
Prepared by Revd Jean Quick.



Call to Worship.

Hosanna to the Son of David! Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!

STF 262

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

Thou art the King of Israel,
thou David's royal Son,
who in the Lord's name earnest,
the King and Blessèd One.

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

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

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

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

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

Prayers of adoration and confession

Give us this day our daily bread that lets our hearts sing...

That we can express our loves our likes our hates our fears, the depths of our joys, our sorrows our hopes our dreams.

Give us this day our daily bread that lets our hearts sing...

That we can live and be ourselves knowing you hear our songs, that we can sing out our hearts desire.

Give us this day our daily bread that lets our hearts sing...

As you know the songs of our souls, the depths of our being, may those others who hear them through us see you.

O Lord our God, on this Lenten journey, let us sing and shout and proclaim your way, your Word. **Amen.**

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.**

Bible reading. Luke 19:28-40

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, "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. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'" Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They replied, "The Lord needs it." They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road. 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:

"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!" "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

Reflection

Today is Palm Sunday and we readily think of the Palm branches that were raised as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey.

I don't know if you like crowds? I used to love the buzz of a crowd when I was younger. Now I am not that fond of crowds. Just imagine that you were in the crowd at that first triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Who would you be and what would you see or do? Would you be breaking down the branches to wave? Or tutting at the wanton destruction? Would you be delighted at the spectacle of Jesus riding a donkey, not a great magnificent horse? Or would you be saying, "isn't that so and so's un-ridden colt? I don't think he would have given permission for this?" Would you be cheering or jeering, "A king, more like a clown on a donkey!" Who would you be in the crowd? A disciple joyfully praising till you feel like your voice is going hoarse? Or a Pharisee telling Jesus to hush the crowd? Or what about the 'things' that are trodden upon, downtrodden, unnoticed and yet elevated by Jesus. "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out." What about being a stone? Or symbolically something or someone that is trodden upon, unnoticed? There would have been many in the crowd who felt just like that. Under Roman occupation with all the misery that it brought. Taxation, foreign interference and control of their affairs and lives. Corruption rife and so much more. We are still in an economic crisis, no doubt we blame someone for that. The wars that are raging around the world remind us of the loss of peace and freedom for too many. With so many problems at home and abroad, many, many people will feel defeated and downtrodden, like just another stone unnoticed and stepped on. And yet there is beauty in a stone, just wash over a stone with water and see how it shines. The intricacies that lay hidden in the dust are revealed in its fissures and surface. Stones can be composed from many layers and hold a wealth of geological history. Stones are strong and tough. When you take time to look at a stone it really does cry out about the wonders of God's creation. People are the same, take anyone in the crowd and discover their past and present and it's surprising what you might find. Even the Pharisees who try to hush the crowd, individually have a story and a sense of seeking redemption. Even if it was a misperception of what being a follower of God meant.

I came across an interesting Holy Week song called, "I ain't gonna let No rock outpraise me In my place", by a Kansas ex R&B nightclub singer, Dr Ron Kenoly. The chorus continues: I ain't gonna let No rock cry in my place I ain't gonna let No rock outpraise me I ain't gonna let it sing. An interesting thought as we think of ourselves on the Palm Sunday road. Are we silent or out praising and jubilant with our praise?

Ron was born in December 1944 Ron said that when his mother, Edith Kenoly, was pregnant with him, she would rub her stomach and pray "Lord let this one praise you." Ron desperately wanted to make it in the world of music. He never seemed to get the fame he craved. At one point he left the music business behind and joined the air force. He kept up some of his music interests and formed a small band that toured around the air force bases. When he left the military he went to Los Angeles and eventually gave up secular music and spent four years attempting to get a gospel record deal. It was at the time when his marriage was falling apart and his wife had rededicated her life to Christ. Ron saw what was needed, so shortly afterwards he took the same path, his marriage healed and despondent with his career and desire for fame, he decided he was going to give up music. Almost immediately his life began to change. He received a series of invitations to lead worship at various crusades and eventually became a praise and worship leader. It's said that his albums sell many more, than Graham Kendrick. However for Ron the importance of this turn around was using his talents to praise God. Ron like many people has a history that might have had some rough edges but when he became more committed to what Christ wanted for him rather than his own desires, he shone and certainly his mother's wish came true, he praised and goes onto praise God through his music.

Going back to that Palm Sunday road and Jesus' statement that the very stones would cry out, God's praises. Well can something so inanimate have a voice? Jesus says so and the volume is definitely going to be up high.

There are some other interesting statements in this Palm Sunday story. The colt had never been ridden, it needed untying and the disciples had to just say, "The Lord needs it."

A colt that had never been ridden represented a colt that has never been trained to have someone riding on it. So you can imagine the concern implied by that. I have never ridden a horse, donkeys and camels yes, and in the knowledge that they were trained and used to carrying people. Imagine your offered a ride in the stables and the creature your given has never been ridden before? I definitely would be wanting to pass on that experience! Yet Jesus riding into Jerusalem was no rodeo event. Definitely not a show of force of Christ versus an unbroken in animal. The Colt not used to carrying a person has cloaks thrown upon it, is ridden by Jesus and into the uproar of the crowd. The colt I imagine humbly and proudly accepts the role Jesus placed upon it and is unshaken by the new experience's or the difficulties that it faced.

The Colt was tied shows that the colt was old enough to wander off from it's Mother. Also when you think about donkeys and how stubborn they can be. They are often seen being pulled by the rope's that tether them. So this Colt that was to be brought to Jesus needed no ties to keep it from wandering away, or ties to pull it in the direction that Jesus wanted it to go. I am reminded of a line from the hymn 'Come thou fount of every blessing', that says, "Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love". As we follow Jesus in this Holy Week are we prone to wandering? Do we reluctantly face Good Friday wishing for Easter Sunday? We are not alone. As we follow the Holy Week journey we see how difficult it was even for Jesus' closest followers.

The Lord needs it? Jesus is seen by the crowd and the disciples as The Saviour. They have seen his miracles and they cry out, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” What does the Lord need? What would you give him? I think if I had been sent to fetch the colt I would have been tempted to leave it behind. We have seen his glory, he’s our king, he deserves the best, give him the horse not some unbroken colt. Horses speak of majesty and it’s the best we can bring him. The kings in Jesus day would have never rode on a donkey. The very idea would have been an insult. Kings would have been in drawn carriages, or at the very least mounted on a well-conditioned, turned-out, noble-in-appearance horse. Donkeys were meant for packing or were transportation for common folk. They certainly did not display the splendour and glory bestowed upon a king. Our Savior willingly, as a grown man, in loving obedience to the call on His life, as a king unlike any other: as a humble servant. On a donkey that by all rights shouldn’t have even allowed Him to sit on his back rode into Jerusalem to face all that he knew must follow.

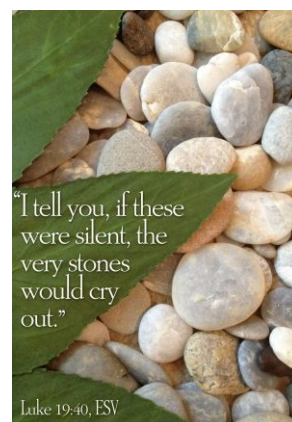
What might be around or within us that has never been ‘ridden’? What needs releasing and untying? Why? because the Lord needs it. What he needs is no great overture’s but our humble obedient praise.

Palm Sunday is a demanding entry day. The entry into Holy Week. A time for us to reflect and travel along the familiar but challenging route to the Cross and the Resurrection. To look again at the events that have given us hope and salvation. The painful price that had to be paid for our transgressions.

Easter eggs start to creep into the shops as soon as Christmas is past and hot cross buns can even be bought before Christmas. A secular reflection on how we so desperately want the joy of Easter Sunday but! There’s a hard road to follow before we get to Easter Sunday.

Jesus may have meant that the stones would cry out praise. However ‘cry’ can have different meanings, not least the cry of pain and sadness. I guess if I were a stone in the road trodden upon, I would certainly cry out but not a cry of praise more a response to suffering. It would take a lot to make me cry out, “bless you!”. And isn’t that what Jesus is symbolically saying of himself. He chose a humble beast to enter the city upon to show his lowly self. Peter in Ephesians 2:20-22 described him as the cornerstone of our faith. Matthew 21:42 Jesus was teaching in the temple courts when the chief priests and elders approached Him and demanded to know the source of His authority. In response, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes" . Jesus identifies himself as a stone that by his sacrifice brings praise to God.

This Palm Sunday and as we follow Christ in this Holy Week are you going to let, ‘some rock out praise’, you? Or as we reflect and pray and follow Christ on this difficult journey will our praises out shine the glory that is all around us?



STF 264

Make way, make way, for Christ the King
in splendour arrives;
fling wide the gates and welcome him
into your lives.

*Make way (Make way), make way (make way),
for the King of kings (for the King of kings);
make way (make way), make way (make way),
and let his Kingdom in.*

He comes the broken hearts to heal,
the prisoners to free;

the deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
the blind shall see.

And those who mourn with heavy hearts,
who weep and sigh,
with laughter, joy and royal crown
he'll beautify.

We call you now to worship him
as Lord of all,
to have no gods before him,
their thrones must fall!

Prayers of Intercession

Loving God, Your Son Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey as a different kind of king. You call us to be different too. We pray that we may bear the fruit of your Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Take firm root in our lives, so we may lovingly serve and welcome all, with no exceptions. Help us to live together in your love and shine as lights in the darkness to reveal your glory in the world.

*Lord in your love: **Hear our prayer***

Loving God, at the Last Supper, Jesus washed his Disciples’ feet as an example of service. We pray for all those who serve us – all those in the NHS, social care and other essential services; all who volunteer or work with the numerous organisations bringing aid around the troubled areas of the world. We thank you for their compassionate love and ask you to bless their work; equip them with

the energy and determination they need to go on rising to the needs of those who desperately need them. Help us all to seek the common good.

*Lord in your love: **Hear our prayer***

Loving God, In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus experienced distress and anguish over what lay ahead. We pray for all who are experiencing distress and anguish at the present time. All those who are ill; at home or in hospital; those fearful for others; those whose jobs have vanished; whose futures are in great doubt. For those in positions of leadership who have to make difficult decisions and choices to serve the common good. We thank you for all the efforts made on theirs and our behalf and pray that we may all receive your peace and love.

*Lord in your love: **Hear our prayer***

Loving God, In Jesus, you love the whole world. So, we continue to pray for those areas where normal, daily life is violence, war and grinding poverty. We continue to remember the situation in Syria, the Middle East, the Ukraine and Afghanistan.

We pray that as we approach Easter, peace may begin to take root even in these dark places.

*Lord in your love: **Hear our prayer***

Loving God, On the cross as Jesus died, your love was glorified. We thank you that He was obedient to death and that you raised Him on high so we know that not even death can separate us from your love. You have redeemed us by love. Jesus is the light of the world; a light which eternally shines and brings hope, that no darkness can quench. Today, we commend all who have died to your eternal joy and care.

As we live, work and pray through Holy Week, we thank you that you turn our darkness into light. In your light shall we see light.

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

The Lord's Prayer.

STF 265

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.

The Blessing

May God, whose arms were spread on the cross to embrace the whole world,
help us this week to take up the cross
and follow him. **Amen.**

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