

Jesus enters Jerusalem



Suffering Saviour, share with us your strength in the face of suffering and grant us your vision as we tread the path through this world. Make us firm in faith as we seek to walk in your ways. Amen.

A Palm Sunday reflection

by Janice Scott

Janice Scott sets Palm Sunday in context.

Palm Sunday is the only occasion in the Gospels where Jesus appears to have made advance preparations, and the only time when we're told that he rides. So why did he make elaborate preparations to ride into Jerusalem? Presumably he was physically demonstrating a powerful message – that he was indeed the king coming in peace, as prophesied by Zechariah. Certainly the crowd went wild with excitement, spreading their cloaks on the road – a centuries-

old way of acclaiming a king (2 Kings 9:13) – and hailing him as “the Son of David!” – a well-known title for Israel’s Messiah.

At the beginning of Passover week the city would have been full and the Roman presence very obvious, because nationalist trouble would be expected. By riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus may also have been emphasising the difference between earthly rulers such as Pilate or Herod, who rode on splendid mounts or in elaborate chariots, and God’s servant king, who came humbly and in peace. 🙏

Heather Smith *reflects on* Philippians 2:5-11

Today Jesus enters Jerusalem and the crowd welcomes him, but as the week goes on it becomes clear that the welcome was simply that of people who were carried away in the moment, and that they are capable of a shocking turnaround. Ask any leader or politician and they will tell you that your supporters can turn on you in an instant when the circumstances change or someone else offers a better chance of advancement. It all seems so meaningless and unfair, with people playing games to obtain a little more power without caring who gets hurt in the process.

We human beings search for meaning and we rail against cruel or distressing events that seem to have none. If the events of Holy Week were simply the meaningless disloyalty of a crowd and pointless cruelty of those afraid for their own positions, we might still be struggling to find meaning for our own lives. But today’s reading from Philippians gives us the meaning we desire. Christ emptied himself and humbled himself to death on a cross, but God exalted him, making his story the most meaningful narrative in history.

Philippians encourages us: “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.” We too might suffer, but his suffering gives our suffering, and our whole lives, the meaning we search for. 🙏

Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

We’ve gone from resting here in the winter to working flat out in the spring, with lambs, chicks and ducklings to care for, two piglets arriving and a polytunnel to weed and plant. Some days it’s going well and others are a tragedy that needs rescuing somehow. From twenty-four eggs, only a lone duckling hatched yesterday,

so I made a dash to a friend who’d found a hen with ten surprise chicks in the barn and I collected two little bundles of fluff. Introducing chicks to a duckling meant watching them crossing boundaries of voice, appearance and species, and yet this morning they are finally snuggled up together.

God encourages us to make community where there’s brokenness, to get over our judgements and to not give up in despair. I learn so much from these tiny creatures and they have become my prayer for today for this God-given world. 🙏

“No pain, no palm; no thorn, no throne.”

William Penn (1644-1718), English writer and religious thinker