

Parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation - King's Lynn

Church of Our Lady of the Annunciation
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Holy Family Church
Field Lane, Gaywood,
King's Lynn. PE30 4AY

Sunday, 5th April 2020.

Palm Sunday

This gospel is read at the procession with palms before Mass:

Gospel - Matthew 21:1-11

Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!

When they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village facing you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her: untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord has need of them," and he will send them immediately.'

This took place to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet, saying, *'Tell the daughter of Sion, Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on an ass, and on a colt, the foal of an ass.'*

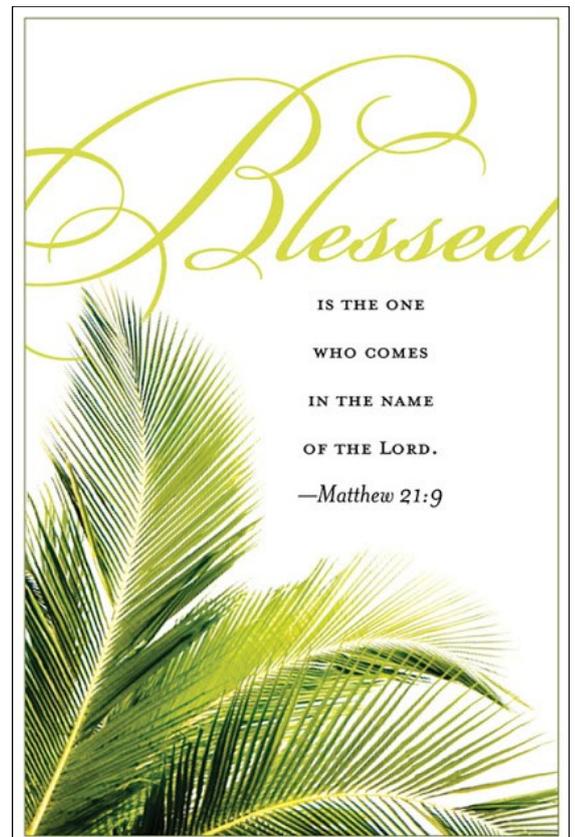
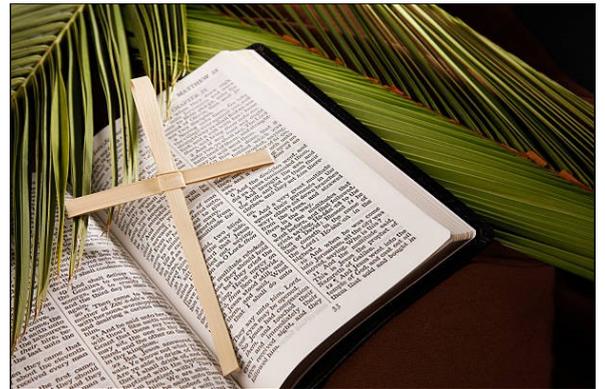
The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the ass and the colt, and put their garments on them, and he sat thereon. Most of the crowd spread their garments on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road.

And the crowds that went before him and that followed him shouted, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!'

And when he entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, 'Who is this?'

And the crowds said, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee.'



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First reading - Isaiah 50:4-7

I did not cover my face against insult: I know I shall not be shamed

The Lord has given me
a disciple's tongue.

So that I may know how to reply to the wearied
he provides me with speech.

Each morning he wakes me to hear,
to listen like a disciple.

The Lord has opened my ear.

For my part, I made no resistance,
neither did I turn away.

I offered my back to those who struck me,
my cheeks to those who tore at my beard;

I did not cover my face
against insult and spittle.

The Lord comes to my help,
so that I am untouched by the insults.

So, too, I set my face like flint;
I know I shall not be shamed.

Responsorial Psalm - Psalm 21(22):8-9,17-20,23-24

R My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

All who see me, deride me.
They curl their lips, they toss their heads.
'He trusted in the Lord, let him save him;
Let him release him if this is his friend.'

R My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Many dogs have surrounded me,
a band of wicked beset me.
They tear holes in my hands and my feet
I can count every one of my bones.

R My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

They divide my clothing among them.
They cast lots for my robes.
O Lord do not leave me alone,
my strength, make haste to help me!

R My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

I will tell of your name to my brethren
And praise you where they are assembled.
‘You who fear the Lord give him praise;
all sons of Jacob, give him glory.
Revere him, Israel’s sons.

R My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Second reading - Philippians 2:6-11

Christ humbled himself but God raised him high

His state was divine,
yet Christ Jesus did not cling
to his equality with God
but emptied himself
to assume the condition of a slave
and became as men are;
and being as all men are,
he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him the name
which is above all other names
so that all beings
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim
Jesus Christ as Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel Acclamation - Phil2:8-9

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!
Christ was humbler yet,
even to accepting death, death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him the name which is above all names.
Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

Gospel - Matthew 26:14-27:66

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Key: N. Narrator. ✠ Jesus. O. Other single speaker. C. Crowd, or more than one speaker.

- N.** One of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said,
- O.** What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?
- N.** They paid him thirty silver pieces, and from that moment he looked for an opportunity to betray him.
- Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus to say,
- C.** Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the passover?
- N.** He replied:
- ✠** Go to so-and-so in the city and say to him, 'The Master says: My time is near. It is at your house that I am keeping Passover with my disciples.'
- N.** The disciples did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover.
- When evening came he was at table with the twelve disciples. And while they were eating he said:
- ✠** I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray me.
- N.** They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn,
- C.** Not I, Lord, surely?
- N.** He answered,
- ✠** Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!
- N.** Judas, who was to betray him, asked in his turn,
- O.** Not I, Rabbi, surely?
- N.** Jesus answered:
- ✠** They are your own words.
- N.** Now as they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said:
- ✠** Take it and eat; this is my body.
- N.** Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them, saying:
- ✠** Drink, all of you, from this, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. From now on, I tell you, I shall not drink

wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.

- N.** After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them,
- ✠ You will all lose faith in me this night, for the scripture says: *I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered*, but after my resurrection I shall go before you to Galilee.
- N.** At this, Peter said,
- O.** Though all lose faith in you, I will never lose faith.
- N.** Jesus answered him,
- ✠ I tell you solemnly, this very night, before the cock crows, you will have disowned me three times.
- N.** Peter said to him,
- O.** Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.
- N.** And all the disciples said the same.
Then Jesus came with them to a small estate called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples,
- ✠ Stay here while I go over there to pray.
- N.** He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And sadness came over him, and great distress. Then he said to them,
- ✠ My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and keep awake with me.
- N.** And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed:
- ✠ My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it.
- N.** He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter:
- ✠ So you had not the strength to keep awake with me one hour? You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.
- N.** Again, a second time, he went away and prayed:
- ✠ My Father, if this cup cannot pass by without my drinking it, your will be done!
- N.** And he came back again and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy. Leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating the same words. Then he came back to the disciples and said to them,
- ✠ You can sleep on now and take your rest. Now the hour has come when the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is already close

at hand.

- N.** He was still speaking when Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared, and with him a large number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. Now the traitor had arranged a sign with them. He had said,
- O.** ‘The one I kiss, he is the man. Take him in charge.’
- N.** So he went straight up to Jesus and said,
- O.** Greetings, Rabbi.
- N.** and kissed him. Jesus said to him,
- ✠** My friend, do what you are here for.
- N.** Then they came forward, seized Jesus and took him in charge. At that, one of the followers of Jesus grasped his sword and drew it; he struck out at the high priest’s servant, and cut off his ear. Jesus then said,
- ✠** Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father who would promptly send more than twelve legions of angels to my defence? But then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that say this is the way it must be?
- N.** It was at this time that Jesus said to the crowds,
- ✠** Am I a brigand, that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I sat teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid hands on me.
- N.** Now all this happened to fulfil the prophecies in scripture. Then all the disciples deserted him and ran away.
- The men who had arrested Jesus led him off to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. Peter followed him at a distance, and when he reached the high priest’s palace, he went in and sat down with the attendants to see what the end would be.
- The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus, however false, on which they might pass the death sentence. But they could not find any, though several lying witnesses came forward. Eventually two stepped forward and made a statement,
- O.** This man said: ‘I have power to destroy the Temple of God and in three days build it up.’
- N.** The high priest then stood up and said to him,
- O.** Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?
- N.** But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him,
- O.** I put you on oath by the living God to tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.
- N.** Jesus answered:

✠ The words are your own. Moreover, I tell you that from this time onward you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

N. At this, the high priest tore his clothes and said,

O. He has blasphemed. What need of witnesses have we now? There! You have just heard the blasphemy. What is your opinion?

N. They answered,

C. He deserves to die.

N. Then they spat in his face and hit him with their fists; others said as they struck him,

C. Play the prophet, Christ! Who hit you then?

N. Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came up to him and said,

O. You too were with Jesus the Galilean.

N. But he denied it in front of them all, saying:

O. I do not know what you are talking about.

N. When he went out to the gateway another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there,

O. This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.

N. And again, with an oath, he denied it:

O. I do not know the man.

N. A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter,

C. You are one of them for sure! Why, your accent gives you away.

N. Then he started calling down curses on himself and swearing:

O. I do not know the man.

N. At that moment the cock crew, and Peter remembered what Jesus had said, 'Before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly.

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people met in council to bring about the death of Jesus. They had him bound, and led him away to hand him over to Pilate, the governor.

When he found that Jesus had been condemned, Judas his betrayer was filled with remorse and took the thirty silver pieces back to the chief priests and elders, saying:

O. I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood.

N. They replied:

C. What is that to us? That is your concern.

- N.** And flinging down the silver pieces in the sanctuary he made off and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the silver pieces and said,
- C.** It is against the Law to put this into the treasury: it is blood-money.
- N.** So they discussed the matter and bought the potter's field with it as a graveyard for foreigners, and this is why the field is called the Field of Blood today. The words of the prophet Jeremiah were then fulfilled: *And they took the thirty silver pieces, the sum at which the precious One was priced by children of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord directed me.*
- Jesus, then, was brought before the governor, and the governor put to him this question:
- O.** Are you the king of the Jews?
- N.** Jesus replied,
- ✠ It is you who say it.
- N.** But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him,
- O.** Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?
- N.** But to the governor's complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charges. At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate said to them,
- O.** Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?
- N.** For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message,
- O.** Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him.
- N.** The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor spoke and asked them,
- O.** Which of the two do you want me to release for you?
- N.** they said,
- C.** Barabbas.
- N.** Pilate said to them:
- O.** But in that case, what am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?
- N.** They all said:
- C.** Let him be crucified!
- N.** Pilate asked:
- O.** Why? What harm has he done?

- N.** But they shouted all the louder,
- C.** Let him be crucified!
- N.** Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said,
- O.** I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.
- N.** And the people, to a man, shouted back,
- C.** His blood be on us and on our children!
- N.** Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged and then handed over to be crucified.
- The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him. Then they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying,
- C.** Hail, king of the Jews!
- N.** And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucify him.
- On their way out, they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him.
- Above his head was placed the charge against him; it read: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.
- The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said,
- C.** So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!
- N.** The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way, saying:
- C.** He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He puts his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, 'I am the son of God.'
- N.** Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.
- From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice,
- ✠ Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?
- N.** That is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood there heard this, they said,

- C. The man is calling on Elijah.
- N. and one of them quickly ran to get a sponge which he dipped in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink. The rest of them said:
- C. Wait! See if Elijah will come to save him.
- N. But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

At that, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people. Meanwhile the centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and said,

- C. In truth this was a son of God.
- N. And many women were there, watching from a distance, the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after him. Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.
When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, called Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate thereupon ordered it to be handed over. So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud and put it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. Now Mary of Magdala and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.
Next day, that is, when Preparation Day was over, the chief priests and the Pharisees went in a body to Pilate and said to him,
- C. Your Excellency, we recall that this impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I shall rise again.' Therefore give the order to have the sepulchre kept secure until the third day, for fear his disciples come and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' This last piece of fraud would be worse than what went before.
- N. Pilate said to them:
- O. You may have your guard. Go and make all as secure as you know how.
- N. So they went and made the sepulchre secure, putting seals on the stone and mounting a guard.

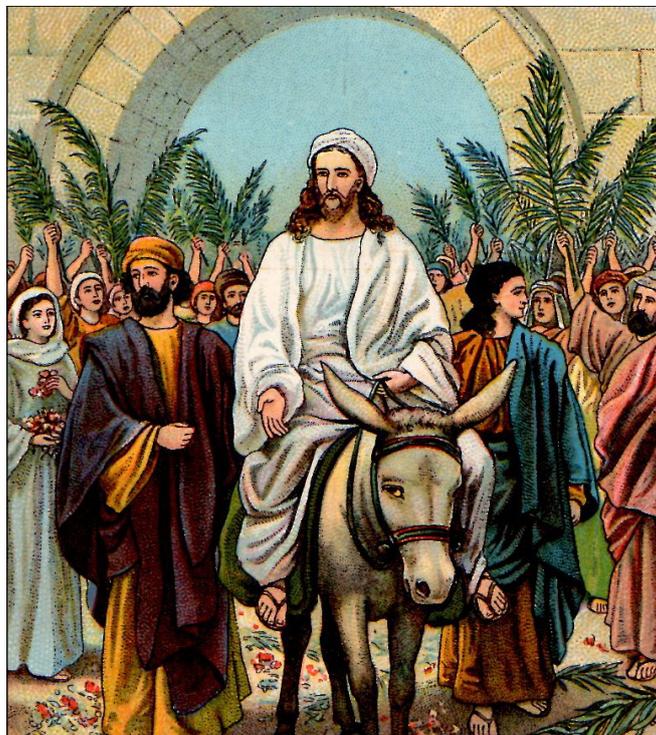
Who Is This?

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion (A)

Rediscover the identity of Jesus as the drama of Holy Week unfolds once more, not only in our churches, but also in our homes and in our hearts.

‘Who is this?’ people asked, as Jesus, riding on an ass, with a crowd of supporters, arrived in Jerusalem, creating something of a stir (Matthew 21: 10), on the first day of what we know as Holy Week.

It’s the question of his identity. On this occasion it wasn’t prompted by anything that he said. It was what he did — riding into town on an ass. He was accompanied by excited, even elated followers, some spreading their clothes along the way, like rolling out the red carpet, while others were strewing the road with branches from the trees — hence the palms — it was standard practice at the time to lay down leaves and flowers on the street for a victory parade. They were shouting — ‘Hosanna for the son of David, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord’. To that extent they knew who he was.



More specifically, in this cavalcade, riding on a she-ass, more specifically, Jesus was symbolically affirming his understanding of leadership and authority.

In many different cultures both ancient and modern people love parades and processions, especially if figures of great authority are on show. For our part, in Britain, consider the crowds in the Mall cheering the Queen in her horse-drawn carriage as she makes her way along to some State event. Or think of the President of the United States in a motorcade of some 45 vehicles, — a mesmerizing demonstration of power.

The symbolism of riding on an ass does not escape Matthew (21: 4-5). Weaving together quotations from Isaiah and Zechariah he explains that by choosing a she-ass to carry him into the holy city Jesus was fulfilling an age-old prophecy, signalling to the people — ‘the daughter of Sion’ — that their king had come — ‘humbly’. Like people everywhere, they had seen enough of powerful kings in the rulers of Babylon and now, under Roman occupation, they had troops clattering through the streets in their chariots. They might recall stories of the legendary Alexander the Great’s entrance into Jerusalem in 332 BC riding arrogantly high on his magnificent warhorse.

In contrast, as if mocking it, Jesus turns it upside down. No king in those days, no Roman imperial authority figure, no country’s leader in our time either, would ever appear so absurdly on the back of an ass. It’s almost a joke — not organized enough to count even as a protest march. If this is Jesus finally beginning to reveal his identity then isn’t he doing so by

That was of course true. Yet it doesn't explain why he comes riding on an ass — to explain that, as Matthew notes, we need the four or five hundred year old prophecies about the king who comes humbly. But this is Palm Sunday of the Passion. We go on to listen to the Passion according to Saint Matthew and as we do so, we are drawn more deeply and explicitly into the identity of the central figure. The Roman centurion and his men cry out in awe : ' Truly this man was a son of God' (27: 54). Or 'the Son of God'? What could these pagan soldiers really have meant? And then what about the women — the 'many women'; women 'who had followed Jesus from Galilee and ministered to him', the women who now 'watched at a distance' — "Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee" (27: 56) — what were they thinking?

It's only the first day of Holy Week. Much else will be remembered and revealed. Palm Sunday is the start, where we are called by the Church to begin. 'Christ is risen' we shall tell one another when Easter Day comes; but our reaffirmation of who he is begins with the followers who so joyfully strewed his path with palm branches, believing him to be the long awaited king of peace, and with the Roman soldiers in their awe, whatever they meant by what they said; and finally the women, saying nothing that has been recorded, — watching and waiting.



HOLY WEEK

