

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 28 March 2021

Palm Sunday



Welcome

Below is a service sheet for you to use at home. You can also find our Sunday morning reflection on YouTube channel, available at 10am on Sunday, (and afterwards). Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it.

*If we can support you in any way at the present time, or you would just like to chat, do please get in touch: 023 8055 4231
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Introduction from Rev Peter Dockree

Welcome to our service today, however you are joining us. This Sunday is Palm Sunday, A Sunday when the joyful scenes as Jesus enters Jerusalem quickly turn to a much darker chapter in the story, but a Sunday which points to the hope that lies at Easter.

Greeting

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

And also with you.

The Lord be with you,

And also with you

Prayer of Thanks and Confession

Behind the joyful shouts lay a multitude of thoughts and emotions for those who witnessed Jesus's arrival. In our own lives there likely lies a multitude of thoughts and emotions as we come to worship this morning. Let us recognise the things that we have to be thankful for, the things which bring us joy, the things which give us purpose and hope. Let us own to the things that we perhaps wish were not there, the things of which we are ashamed and want to hide. Let us bring them before God who knows them already and loves us still.

May the God of love
Bring us back to himself,
Forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **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.

Hymn: Ride on Ride on in Majesty

- 1 Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark! all the tribes hosanna cry;
O Saviour meek, pursue your road
with palms and scattered garments
strowed.
- 2 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.
- 3 Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The winged squadrons of the sky
look down with sad and wond'ring eyes
to see th'approaching sacrifice.
- 4 Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh;
the Father on his sapphire throne
expects his own anointed Son.
- 5 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 pow'r and reign.

H H Milman (1791-1868)

Readings

On Palm Sunday, when we meet in person, we tend to have a lot of readings. We start with the Palm Sunday account of Jesus entering Jerusalem and then traditionally later we track

forward and read the whole story of the passion, and put in a few other readings too. Many churches like us no longer do everything, but the dynamic is the same, making the link between that processional entry and then the tide turning which led to Jesus's arrest and death. This morning online we will not read everything but our two readings should reflect that two fold movement from Glory Hosanna to Crucify him, and of course next Sunday we get back to glory. By reading them together though we remember that glory and pain are often not that far apart.

So let us begin with the story of that first palm Sunday. The crowd sitting waiting for Jesus to come, they had heard rumours that Jesus the one rumoured to be doing amazing things and pulling huge crowds was coming to Jerusalem, perhaps they had been sitting at the roadside for hours, waiting. Then he appears, but wait what was this, there was nothing grand about this arrival, wait I think he is on a donkey! Yes!!! He is!!! A donkey!! But the moment swept them up, the crowd were going crazy "Hosanna they shouted, Hosanna". This was a moment to be part of, a moment in history. They all felt they were on the verge of witnessing something very very special. Let us join with the crowd in their excitement and trepidation and say together.

**Hosanna to the Son of David
Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord.**

Mark 15 1-39

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' He answered him, 'You say so.' Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again, 'Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.' But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, 'Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?' For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again, 'Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?' They shouted back, 'Crucify him!' Pilate asked them, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Crucify him!' So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of

the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, 'The King of the Jews.' And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!' In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and

believe.’ Those who were crucified with him also taunted him.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?’ which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, ‘Listen, he is calling for Elijah.’ And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, ‘Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.’ Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, ‘Truly this man was God’s Son!’

A Reflection by Rev Peter Dockree

A cricketer is standing at the wicket bat in hand. It is the first ball of the innings and he hits it hard. It careers towards the boundary (for those who don’t follow cricket that is at the edge of the stadium) in the air and the opposing teams fielder runs to catch it. He dives and throws his hand out. There are two scenarios that might happen next, one is that he drops the ball. Perhaps then the player goes on to score a very big score, perhaps 200,

and the batsman is a hero. The other scenario is that that sliding catch comes off, he catches the ball and the batsman is out for what they call in cricket a golden duck, also known as a failure. The line between total success and abject failure is one tricky catch at the boundary line, a very fine line.

When you look at the story of Palm Sunday and Good Friday together there are various fine lines at play. The fine line between apparent adoration and apparent hatred. Those in the public eye will know this dynamic well, the fall from grace we call it and it happens easily and sometimes very quickly. Sometimes perhaps you may ponder on what you would have done if you found yourself in a different context in life, if your circumstances had been different.

The fine line too between joy and pain. Sometimes someone can appear happy but be battling inside. Someone also can find inner joy and strength in the midst of the darkness. What appears to be a joyful moment in Jesus’s ministry turns out to be a dark one, and then again even that is not the end of the story.

Sometimes we are called to live across the fine lines, acknowledging that things are to always as they seem, acknowledging that others may be neither hero nor villain, looking beyond the surface for the narratives underneath. As Jesus’s life unravelled many in the story had too much at stake to look into Jesus’s eyes and ask what was really happening. They needed

him as their hero or their villain and not as the catalyst to a much bigger narrative.

On Palm Sunday our apparently contradictory themes are not muddled up, but pointing directly to a message that smashes the fine lines and demonstrates a new way.

We may wish to take a moment to reflect on a new way that embraces both darkness and light and that holds our successes and failures in one place.

Prayers

Let us pray for our world, our community and those in need around us. You may wish to light some candles as you pray.

For those in joy and those feeling sorrow, for those in places of darkness and those basking in the light, for those full of hope and those struggling with despair.

As we remember one year of the Covid 19 pandemic, we think of all of those who have been affected in whatever way. Those who have died and those who grieve. Those who have suffered the emotional and mental health impacts of this pandemic. Those who have worked as key workers in so many different settings. Those who have secretly had a good year and fear saying so or a “return to normal”. Those whose finances have taken a

huge hit this year and are struggling to make ends meet and all who are providing support to those struggling.

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

Hymn: Meekness and Majesty (This is your God)

1. Meekness and majesty,
Manhood and Deity,
In perfect harmony,
The Man who is God.
Lord of eternity
Dwells in humanity,
Kneels in humility
And washes our feet.

*O what a mystery,
Meekness and majesty.
Bow down and worship
For this is your God,
This is your God.*

2. Father's pure radiance,
Perfect in innocence,
Yet learns obedience
To death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life,
Conquering through sacrifice,
And as they crucify
Prays: 'Father forgive.'

3. Wisdom unsearchable,
God the invisible,
Love indestructible
In frailty appears.
Lord of infinity,
Stooping so tenderly,
Lifts our humanity
To the heights of His throne.

Graham Kendrick
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Closing Blessing

Thank you to everyone for worshiping with us today.

As we take up our cross and follow, may we experience love, embrace challenge, and hold onto hope.

May the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be among us and remain with us always.

Amen

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