

**AMDG**  
**PALM SUNDAY OF THE**  
**PASSION OF THE LORD**  
**YEAR A**  
**9 APRIL 2017**



**Hosanna to the Son of David;  
blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord**

**OPENING PRAYER**

Increase the faith of those who place their hope in you, O God, and graciously hear the prayers of those who call on you, that we, who today hold high these branches, to hail Christ in his triumph, may bear fruit for you by good works accomplished in him.

As I prepare to follow Jesus over the coming week in the suffering of his Passion, I am aware that my prayer will be made in the knowledge of His Resurrection.

I watch and listen as Jesus enters Jerusalem on a donkey and is acclaimed by the people. Jesus' arrival contrasts with other processions entering Jerusalem for Passover. His way is of humble obedience to the Father, not one of power and pageantry. (*Gospel, Matthew 21:1-11*)

I am encouraged to listen to the Lord, who will give me the words I need to speak of him to others. I know that, because God is with me, I shall not be shamed (*First Reading*). Even if I feel abandoned, as if God has forsaken me, I can pray with confidence and trust, knowing that he will always hasten to help me (*Psalm*) St Paul proclaims the humility of Jesus, as He accepts His humanity and His death. I bow in adoration as the glory of His Resurrection reveals Him as my Lord and my God (*Second Reading*).

During this holiest week of the Church's year, I pray that I may know from the depths of my heart the love of Jesus for me, for us all, shown most fully in His willingness to die for my sin.

## FIRST READING: ISAIAH 50: 4-7

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.

The reading is from the Suffering Servant Songs of Isaiah, who called the Babylonian exiles to fidelity and tried to help them find meaning in their sufferings. The first part describes Isaiah's mission and how God prepared him; the second describes the difficulties involved and his response to them and to God. The words perfectly describe Jesus.

I read the passage slowly, praying it—perhaps as Isaiah, and/or Jesus, and/or self, and/or a significant person who persevered(s) with a difficult mission, despite persecution.

What was their task—and what is mine? How did God prepare them—and how did God prepare me? How did they respond? How do I respond—in a Christ-like way? What do I want to say to God ... to say to Jesus?

I bring my prayer to a close in my own words, saying to God whatever is in my heart and mind.

## SECOND READING: PHILIPPIANS 2: 6-11

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.

Paul encourages selfless lives, with Jesus as our model. I read this passage and accompany Jesus in his journey of self-emptying love. He offers to become man so as to show us the way to God. What was he leaving behind? I'm with him as he grows up in a Galilean backwater, as he moves round the country—teaching, healing, forgiving, dependent on others for hospitality and care ... as he, God's son, washes his disciples' feet ... as he puts up with persecution and a cruel death for telling the truth about God and for behaving as God would behave. How did Jesus 'empty' himself? What enabled him to do this? Did the Father let him down? How like Jesus am I? I recall those times when I have shown self-emptying love. I recall the ways in which I still have to grow in this kind of love. I ask Jesus to make me more like him.

**Here's a text if you've only got a minute...**

Look, your king comes to you; he is humble, he rides on a donkey. *Entrance Gospel, Matthew 21:4*

Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord. *Entrance Gospel, Matthew 21:10*

The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue ... and comes to my help. *First Reading, Isaiah 50:4, 7*

They divide my clothing among them, they cast lots for my robe *Responsorial Psalm, Psalm 21*

For us Christ was obedient, even unto death, a death on a cross, and that is why God raised him to such a height and gave him the name which is greater than any other name. *Second Reading Philippians 2: 8-9*



How does this image help me meditate on the events of Holy Week?

**REFLECTIONS**

What does Holy Week hold for me and how do I feel God may be calling me?

And so, what do I want to ask of God for myself and for others?

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