

Dear all

Having managed to phone around everyone I had phone numbers for, I had a great time chatting to all and seeing how you were. I would like to involve a couple more people in the church to phone round at other times – I intend to catch up with all who are on the prayer list for that day of the month. Please let me know if you do **NOT** want me to pass your number on to one of our fellow church members. These church members will have been DBS (safeguarding) checked by the diocese.

Otherwise this is a single item posting that you might be interested in, from a friend of mine. The fact that Mark's gospel is not this year's lectionary gospel is more than compensated for by David Suchet's wonderful reading. Click on the blue link.



A reflection on Palm Sunday

from Dr Paula Gooder,
Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral

You might like to read Matthew 21.1-17.

Alternatively, it is traditional on Palm Sunday to listen to the whole of the 'Passion story' from Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to his crucifixion. If you would like to do this you can hear David Suchet reading from [Mark's Gospel](#). (You will find the Passion Reading in the video from 1.40.48 to 2.00.09.)

(You can also listen to this reflection on our [SoundCloud channel](#).)

Palm Sunday is one of the most bittersweet moments in the Church's calendar. On Palm Sunday we commemorate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem when all the crowds accompanying him sang a Psalm of praise, waved branches and appeared to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem as king. After years of not recognising who Jesus was, of misunderstanding and conflict, it feels as though the crowd suddenly get it. They see Jesus riding on a donkey and remember prophecies like those in Zechariah 9.9 ('Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey') or maybe that Solomon had ridden to his coronation on a donkey (1 Kings 1.33). Whatever it was, the crowd finally seemed to understand who Jesus was and what he had come to do – and celebrated. Of course, we know – as Jesus did himself – that this is not the happy ending we might hope for. Almost the moment that Jesus set foot in Jerusalem, the crowd turned and melted away. Only a week later they were baying for his death.

One of the things that strikes me every year on Palm Sunday is how Jesus acts through all of this. We know that he knew his death was imminent, because he told the disciples about it on more than one occasion. He must have seen the crowd's celebration and known how quickly they would change. A strong sense of foreboding hangs over this whole event; a sense that the worst is still to come. And yet, through it all Jesus persevered. Quietly, authentically, generously, he went about his business as he always did: teaching the disciples; responding with love to people like the woman who anointed him with oil; holding his own against those who sought to trip him up with difficult questions.

By doing so he suggests to us how we might seek to live in hard times. The answer? One step at a time. Not letting the anxieties and stresses that lie all around us knock us off course; being who we are called to be

quietly, authentically and generously. It may help to remember that even Jesus became overwhelmed with grief in the Garden of Gethsemane just before his arrest. We are not called to be unfeeling automatons but we see in Jesus through all of this – especially during his trial when the accusations flying around became more and more desperate – a still centre. Someone who listened more than he spoke. Someone who never stopped being truly who he was. This is the Jesus of Palm Sunday, the Jesus of Holy Week. This Jesus stands with us through all of this, knowing our pain, giving us comfort and loving us through it all.

Stay safe

Blessings and love

Mark