

Palm Sunday

Holy Week and

Easter Day

The unfolding story
of New Life to come

Never in our life-time has the story
of Holy Week and Easter resonated
so sharply with social circumstances.

When Jesus entered his own fearful
darkness of pain and doubt, he had
his vision set on the outcome of new
Life for everyone. Every step of his
journey was a sharing of the human
story. In every step of our journey he
is our companion.

Jesus is the Light: 'The light shines in
the darkness and the darkness can
never overcome it.' (John 1)

As we live day by day through the
fear and pain of isolation, illness and
inadequacy, we move closer to the
day when new life will grow.

Resurrection is the Easter story.

The Resurrection Story is our story.



Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord

Easter

Good

Holy

Good News of New Life

Sunday

Friday

Week

**Palm Sunday: Blessed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord**

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

I bind unto myself the name,
The strong name of the Trinity,
By invocation of the same,
The Three in One and One in Three.
By whom all nature hath creation,
Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
Praise to the Lord of my salvation,
Salvation is of Christ the Lord.

From St Patrick's Breastplate

PALM SUNDAY (Matt 21.10)

'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord' The accolades abound. Jesus is a celebrity amidst the crowd. What could possibly go wrong?

On Palm Sunday it is traditional to read the 'Long Gospel' from one of the Synoptic gospels. This year it is Matthew's turn to tell the whole story. (Matt 26.14-27.66). Here some of the words of this gospel will be highlighted day by day as Holy Week and Jesus' journey unfolds.

You may wish to read the whole story yourselves. You may find some links in your mind with our current situation in the valley of the shadow of Covid-19

For wise discernment amongst those in government and their advisors, Lord, hear our prayer

Holy Monday - The Upper Room (Matthew 26.26-29)

*Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. **I tell you; I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.**"*

These familiar words, so often heard in our Eucharistic services, are strangely absent at this time; the bread and wine also isolated from our touch. They are never isolated from our hearts and minds – for Christ is within each of us and binds us together across all social divisions. Wherever in the world communion is celebrated, it is on behalf of the whole church. The last verse is strangely appropriate – Jesus expressing how even he will not taste the wine until he drinks it newly with us in the fullness of God's kingdom. Jesus is indeed with us in our times of separation and distress. The fullness of celebration lies ahead.

For the Communion of Saints, the Family of Christ, world-wide, Lord hear our prayer

Holy Tuesday - Gethsemane (Matt 26.38-39)

Jesus is now alone, fearful.

'I am deeply grieved, even to death...My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will but your will be done.'

This olive tree grows in Gethsemane and would be there when Jesus sat under its shade. The photograph was taken in 2009 on a Newcastle Diocesan Pilgrimage. Olive trees have an immense capacity to regenerate despite age and injury. The tree is a symbol of life.



For those who grieve and are anxious of heart, Lord hear our prayer

Holy Wednesday - Out of control (Matt. 27.1-2)

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

Being out of control is frightening. Jesus experienced the betrayal of Judas to the authorities, arrest and trial, without any fair justice. Even Peter denied him – out of fear of the crowd. Covid-19 leaves us 'out of control', makes us feel betrayed, abandoned and it is certainly not 'fair'. How can a loving God allow such a thing? This unanswerable question accompanied Jesus in his journey. His answer was patience and love.

For those who feel lost and cannot see a way ahead, Lord hear our prayer

Maundy Thursday – A New Commandment (John 13. 14,15,34)

On Maundy Thursday we recall St John's record of Jesus washing his disciples' feet.

'If I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. I have set you an example, that you also should do what I have done to you. ... I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.'



The news reports amazing stories of kindness and service across communities - people caring for others in new and self-giving ways.

For those on the front line of medical care and all social support workers, Lord hear our prayer.

Good Friday – gathered around the cross (John 19.40-42-27)



They took Jesus' body and wrapped it with spices in linen cloths. In the garden there was a new tomb in which no-one had been laid... and they laid Jesus there.

A cruel death and a borrowed grave.

It is a natural instinct to gather around those we love who are in pain or dying, despite how helpless we feel. It is especially hard to be barred from doing so.

For all those who weep alone
at the foot of the cross of loved ones,
Lord, have mercy

Holy Saturday – The Great Silence

For those who feel the silence of isolation,
the silence of loved ones, the silence of God;
Christ have mercy

EASTER EVE Vigil

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of Life. (Romans 6.3-4)

This eve we light the Easter Candle. This Eve we welcome new Christians and we renew our baptismal vows

We believe and trust in God the Father Almighty
We believe and trust in Jesus Christ his Son
We believe and trust in the Holy Spirit
We believe and trust in the Three in One

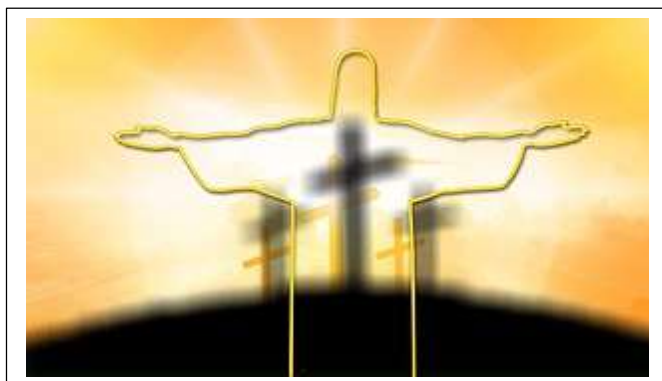
For Faith and Hope and
for Love for one another,
O Lord, hear our prayer

I believe we shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living. O wait for the Lord,
have courage and wait. Wait for the Lord!

EASTER SUNDAY – the unbelievable has happened

Matthew 28.1-10 *After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid;*

I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, “He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.” This is my message for you.’ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.’



Easter Sunday Collect:

God of glory,
by the raising of your Son,
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

ALLELUIA - HE IS RISEN!

Father of all,
we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
We whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**