

Easter Sunday

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

If you can, place a candle in your Easter garden. Read the Easter Gospel and then roll the stone from the tomb and light the candle.

Matthew 28.1-9

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 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 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.

Today is a day of celebration and good news. Christ has been raised from the dead. Death has been defeated.

How will you celebrate today? Perhaps add some bright flowers to the Easter garden you have made. If you do not have fresh flowers available, perhaps make some from coloured paper or card.

Some people will be going out into their gardens to sing an Easter hymn, such as 'Thine be the glory'. If you are not a singer, how about playing some joyful music?

In whatever way you can, rejoice! Christ is risen! Alleluia!

Holy Week at Home



For the first time, this year we will not be able to meet in our churches for worship as we journey through from Palm Sunday to Easter Day. So here are some suggestions, prayers and reflections that you may find useful as you make that Holy Week journey in your own home.



Make your own Easter Garden

A special feature in all our churches each year has been the lovingly prepared Easter gardens. We can't do that in the church buildings this year – but I am sure we each can at home! Why not put together a simple Easter garden, that can be a focus as we pray and reflect on the story of Jesus' death and resurrection?

Find a suitable container – maybe a tray, or a box, or a biscuit tin. You might have some garden compost or soil you could fill it with, or maybe sand. Use whatever you have available in your home or garden. Perhaps add some stones, moss, leaves – use your imagination! On Good Friday, add three crosses – perhaps a palm cross if you have one, or make one from twigs or other material. Use stones to make a tomb – and don't forget on Easter Day to roll the stone away, as we celebrate that Christ is risen.

Palm Sunday



If you have a palm cross, hold it up as you say:

God our Saviour;
whose Son Jesus Christ entered Jerusalem as Messiah to suffer and to die;
let these palms be for us signs of his victory
and grant that we who bear them in his name
may ever hail him as our King,
and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Sing or say

Ride on, ride on in majesty!

Hark, all the tribes hosanna cry.
O Saviour meek, pursue thy road
with palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die:
O Christ, thy triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and cancelled sin.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The winged squadrons of the sky
look down with sad and wondering eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die;
bow thy meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O God, thy power, and reign.

Good Friday

Place a cross, or three crosses, in your Easter garden. Find somewhere to sit quietly. You may like to listen to some suitable sacred music. Slowly, read each of the seven words from the cross that Jesus spoke before he died, taking time to reflect on each one.

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

Then the criminal said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother."

About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"—which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty."

When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice said, "Father into your hands I commend my spirit." Having said this he breathed his last.

Eternal God, in the cross of Jesus

we see the cost of our sin and the depth of your love;

In humble hope and fear we place at his feet

All that we have and all that we are,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Maundy Thursday

These prayers and reflections are most appropriate when you are having your evening meal, whether alone or with family members.

Before the meal say these words of grace:

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation:
Through your goodness we have good things to eat and drink.
Blessed be God for ever.

After the main course, read part of the story of the Last Supper:

While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat, this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

Jesus' words and actions at the Last Supper look to the past, the present and the future. As a Passover meal it recalls God's saving work in history in bringing God's people to freedom. It is a gathering where Jesus is present with his friends. It looks forward to all that is to come, both the suffering and the glory.

Hold up a glass or cup of whatever you are drinking. As you do so, say aloud anything for which you are thankful, in the past or the present. Then name your fears and hopes for what is to come, and commend them to God, saying:

**Jesus, true vine and bread of life,
ever giving yourself that the world might live,
let us share your death and passion:
make us perfect in your love. Amen.**

Palm Gospel: Matthew 21.1-11

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately.' This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, 'Tell the daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

The disciples went and did as Jesus directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?' The crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'

For Reflection:

Think about Jesus riding into Jerusalem, with the crowds cheering and waving branches.

- How might you have felt if you were part of that crowd?
- What might you have been hoping for, as the long expected king entered the city?
- What are you hoping for now? Offer that to God in prayer.

Collect for Palm Sunday

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. **Amen.**

Night Prayer for Holy Week

The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night and a peaceful end. **Amen.**

Our help is in the name of the Lord
who made heaven and earth.

A period of silence for reflection on the past day.

Psalm 91.1-4

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High
and abides under the shadow of the Almighty,

Shall say to the Lord, 'My refuge and my stronghold,
my God, in whom I put my trust.'

For he shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler
and from the deadly pestilence.

He shall cover you with his wings and you shall be safe under his feathers;
his faithfulness shall be your shield and buckler.

Scripture Reading and Reflection (see next page)

Nunc Dimittis

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen your salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people:

A light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.

Prayers finishing with the Lord's Prayer and:

Visit this place, O Lord, we pray,
and drive far from it the snares of the enemy;
may your holy angels dwell with us and guard us in peace,
and may your blessing be always upon us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Readings for Night Prayer in Holy Week

Take time after each reading to picture yourself in the scene. What can you see, or hear, or smell? How does it make you feel? Do you identify with any of the people who were there?

Monday: Matthew 21.12-13

Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold doves. He said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer"; but you are making it a den of robbers.'

Tuesday: Matthew 26.6-13

Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, 'Why this waste? For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor.' But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in all the world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.'

Wednesday: Matthew 26.14-16

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What will you give me if I betray him to you?' They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.