

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

Sunday 29 March 2026

Palm Sunday

Welcome to our Prayers and Reflections for Palm Sunday. It is a day which begins with the crowds waving and cheering as Jesus enters Jerusalem as their King. “Hosanna to the Son of David!” is on their lips and hearts as they prepare for an uprising. Jesus is coming to save them! It is a truly momentous event. Think of the people today who are aching for a king, a leader, to come and set them free to live in peace.

May Jesus be their source of hope,
their light in the darkness.

Every blessing,

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As you prepare to enter Jerusalem with Jesus, I invite you to picture the scene. What sounds can you hear? What are people saying? What are their hopes and dreams as Jesus rides in? What are yours?



Make way, make way, for Christ the King
in splendour arrives.
Fling wide the gates and welcome him
into your lives.

*Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)
© 1986 Kingsway Songs
CCLI reported*

Prayers and Reflections
for use at home on Palm Sunday
Recognition

PREPARING OURSELVES

Take a moment to be still in God's presence, and feel his love. You may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love - here, in this room. If you have a palm cross, you may wish to lay it in your palm or place it on a table, and a bowl of water for the time of letting go.

Father, as I prepare to spend this time in your presence,
I place myself into your hands.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let your will be done in me,
and through me.

Amen.

LETTING GO

If you come to this time of prayer and reflection with any regrets, with things that you wish you had not said, done or been, offer them to God in the silence of your heart. And then, when you are ready, reflect on the second verse of our Palm Sunday hymn.

He comes the broken hearts to heal,
the prisoners to free.

The deaf shall hear, the lame shall dance,
the blind shall see.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

Feel God's forgiveness. Jesus entered the city and risked his life to bring hope to those who are struggling with life. Think about the hope that he has brought into yours. May this thought inspire you this Holy Week.



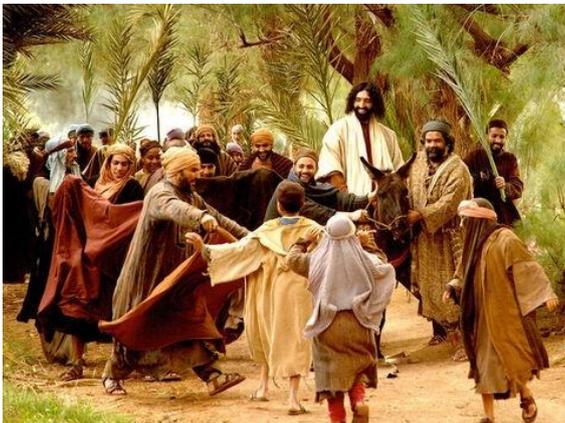
PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

*Across our villages and the worldwide Church,
this prayer is being said today. Add your voice to this earthly circle
of prayer to our Saviour King.*

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.**

*As Holy Week begins, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. The people
start to sing hosannas – hosannas to the Son of David. Hosannas to
their King. Hope is high that the prophecy in Zechariah is coming true,
right here, right now! After five long centuries of waiting, their liberation
has begun. Feel the crowd's joy as they recognise Jesus as the Messiah,
their Saviour King. Enter into their joy and offer your praise.*



*Make way! Make way
for the King of kings!
Make way! Make way
and let his kingdom in!*

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

© 1986 Kingsway Songs

CCLI reported

*But what king of King enters a city on a donkey – a humble creature –
rather than carrying a sword and riding on a stallion at the head of an
army? A king who is more concerned about the poorest of his people
than the powerful and the rich. Bartimaeus, the blind man from Jericho,
will have been in the crowd cheering. At last, he can see the palm trees
and the temple. Were his cheers the loudest of them all? How loud will
yours be this Holy Week?*

Jesus comes to Jerusalem as king

As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.'

This took place to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet:

'Say to Daughter Zion,
"See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

'Hosanna to the Son of David!'

'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'

'Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, 'Who is this?'

The crowds answered, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.'

Recognition

The pilgrims in the city for the Passover festival come to see what's happening. Why all the noise? They feel the excitement of the people who have been following Jesus – the motley mix of disciples who left homes, families and jobs to follow Jesus, the woman healed by Jesus of multiple afflictions, all of the lowly grateful ones, all of the hopeful ones seeking healing. So many people who have a reason to recognise, joyfully, that God has sent Jesus to be their Saviour King.

Jerusalem was an occupied city. On the streets that day will have been soldiers of the Roman army come to assess the situation and keep an eye, a close eye, on the crowds. They hear hymns not war cries. They see palms not swords, happy followers not angry soldiers. This is not a security threat. No danger here! They say to themselves, 'Carry on, enjoy your King for the Day, your illusion of triumph, you fools.' They can't see, can't feel how the world is changing before their eyes. This Donkey King is coming to start a revolution – a spiritual revolution.

Hidden within the crowds will be the Jewish leaders. They recognise what's happening before their eyes. They disapprove of this spectacle, and are itching to say to this upstart Jesus, 'Who do you think you are? The saviour of the world that Zechariah wrote about?' A carpenter's son cannot be God's promised one. With hearts as hard as stone, they fail to recognise who Jesus is. He is the one who loves as God loves, the one who cares as God cares, the one who is inviting God's hurting ones into God's kingdom of justice and peace.

Pause to recognise how Jesus has transformed your life. Give thanks.



And those who mourn with heavy hearts,
who weep and sigh,
with laughter, joy and royal crown
he'll beautify.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)
© 1986 Kingsway Songs
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On Palm Sunday, we are invited to look beyond the crowd's welcoming cries of 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' to the crowd's denying cries of 'Crucify him!'. Egged on by the Jewish authorities, some switch allegiance, some decide that he is not the one to free them from the Romans. Some simply go along with what's happening. The momentum swings the way of the chief priests, elders and scribes. Would you still have the courage to recognise Jesus as God's chosen King? Cry hosanna?

Crucify!

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: 'Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.' But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. Which 'of the two do you want me to release to you?' asked the governor. 'Barabbas,' they answered. 'What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' Pilate asked. They all answered, 'Crucify him!'

'Why? What crime has he committed?' asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, 'Crucify him!'

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged and handed him over to be crucified.

Matthew 27:19-26 (abridged)

Silence is the traditional response to the Passion Narrative. As you pause, ponder how the crowds failed to see who Jesus really is – their King. Renew your devotion to him as you prepare to walk the way of the cross.



We call you now to worship him
as Lord of all,
to have no other gods but him:
their thrones must fall!

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

PRAYERS FOR PALM SUNDAY

Here are some prayers as Holy Week begins. Feel free to add your own.

Servant King, you came to win the hearts of the people,
to bring hope into the lives of the weak and the vulnerable,
the lost and the hurting. Lord, my heart is yours. Accept my worship...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Saviour King, you came to start a revolution – a spiritual revolution,
to open the eyes of the chief priests, elders and scribes,
to change their minds. Lord, challenge the world's oppressors...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Suffering King, you ended the week in great pain. Rejected. Dying,
all to free us from our sins. Nothing can separate me from your love,
Lord, I thank you. Set free those who struggle with past mistakes...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Offer your own heartfelt prayers and yearnings, praise and thanksgivings.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Prayer of Blessing

A closing prayer of blessing for this week.

O God, you search me and you know me,
all my thoughts and feelings are open to your gaze,
you see the paths I will take before I take them. Guide me this week,
as I journey to the cross. Inspire my loved ones, Lord, I pray. **Amen.**