

SHORT REFLECTIVE SERVICE FOR PALM SUNDAY

This is the day that the Lord has made
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Hymn 162 from Hymns and Psalms:

Trotting, trotting through Jerusalem,
Jesus, sitting on a donkey's back,
Children waving branches, singing,
'Happy is he that comes in the name of the Lord!'

Many people in Jerusalem
Thought he should have come on a mighty horse
Leading all the Jews to battle:
'Happy is he that comes in the name of the Lord!'

Many people in Jerusalem
Were amazed to see such a quiet man
Trotting, trotting on a donkey:
'Happy is he that comes in the name of the Lord!'

Trotting, trotting through Jerusalem,
Jesus, sitting on a donkey's back
Let us join the children singing:
'Happy is he that comes in the name of the Lord!'

Reading: Matthew 21:1-11

The story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem is very familiar to most of us. I am very fond of Eddie Askew's books and his writing about this reading talks about the donkey Jesus rode into Jerusalem and he makes 3 points that I have added to.

There was a middle-aged woman evangelist in China who somehow had the freedom to move around and share her faith – she called herself "the Lord's donkey". She carried the Lord around with her. It suggests the willingness to bear a burden without complaining. Perhaps we should think about this, particularly at this time, and reflect on looking for the good around us – maybe the spring flowers, birds singing, the radio and television keeping us informed and entertained, music – and many others.

Secondly, when Jesus sent the disciples for the donkey it was tied up. Only when they untied it was it useful. It made me think about how I am often tied up with things and needing to keep busy. Are you? This time of self-isolating is making many of us do things differently. Perhaps arranging our days around what we can do in the garden or the house, catching up with our reading, jigsaws, telephoning friends and people who are on their own, etc., and reading the wonderful Thoughts for the Day on our Circuit website – all so different and thought provoking – prioritising what is important.

Thirdly, by thinking about a donkey we could maybe, think of ourselves as burden bearers with the weight all on our shoulders. This is definitely a time for allowing others to help us, not always easy when we usually do this for others, and for us to rest in the Lord. As it says 1 Peter chapter 5 verse 7: Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares about you”.

Let us pray together:

Dear Lord, just as you needed the donkey to bear your burden for a short while, we need you all the time. You said that you would be with us until the end of time and on that we rely. So please help us through this time of uncertainty and anxiety and help us see it as an opportunity to re-order our lives and appreciate what we have and what is around us.

We ask this through our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen .

So we read or sing the Hymn number 265 in Singing the Faith as it takes us forward into Holy Week.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark all the tribes 'Hosanna' cry.
Your humble beast pursues its road
With palms and scattered garments strowed.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die:
O Christ, your triumphs now being
O'er captive death and conquered 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!
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh.
The Father, on his sapphire throne,
Expects his own anointed Son.

Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die.
Bow your meek head to mortal pain,
Then take, O God, your power and reign.

Blessing:

May His everlasting peace, tranquility and knowledge of His presence in the Holy Spirit, be with us today and for evermore.

Amen.