

HOME WORSHIP FOR 28 MARCH, PALM/PASSION SUNDAY

OPENING PRAYER

Joy is ours; the exultant crowds welcome Jesus. Sorrow is ours; we know the crowds will cry out, "Crucify him!"

Joy is ours: the disciples are caught up with enthusiasm for their leader.

Sorrow is ours; the disciples will desert their leader at his moment of need.

Joy is ours; we sense the power of evil on the run. Sorrow is ours; we realise the huge cost, which is symbolised by the cross.

Proof of your love: you took the Jerusalem road, and would not be put off when friends suggested an easier way. Jesus, we will be supportive in your Church and our villages.

Symbol of your love: the crowds scattered their palms and hailed you as their royal hero. Jesus, we recognise your worth and will serve with enthusiasm.

Tortured in your love: you did not give in when you were abused, insulted, and hung on a cross. We are humbled when we "survey the wondrous cross."

Triumph of your love: the cross stands empty, as the tomb will be. Jesus, we realise that death will not have the last word, not now, not ever, Amen.

CONFESSION AND WORDS OF ASSURANCE

We listen to the crowds, at first cheering and enthusiastic, then crying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" We recognise our own changing loyalties; the ease with which we can be swayed.

We listen to the few words of Jesus before the ones in power; we feel his awesome presence. We recognise how you, O God, can keep us strong at the time of testing.

We listen to the compassionate response of Jesus on the cross, to the thief beside him. We recognise how difficult it is for us to respond sensitively and appropriately to need.

(In silence allow God to show you the times and ways you haven't followed the example of Jesus.)

God, we are overwhelmed by your gift of Jesus Christ to us. We will respond to your supreme gift with honest reflection, renewed commitment, and firm resolve.

Pardon and peace will be ours. Thanks be to God! Amen.

MEMORY VERSE – try to memorise these verses from today's readings.

Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord GOD who helps me; who will declare me guilty? (Isaiah 50: 8&9)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As we face up to the costly loving shown by our God, let us approach him in humility and pray to him.

O God, give us in your Church undivided hearts to love you and one another, and to go on loving, through insult and praise, through acceptance and rejection, in sure knowledge that you are Lord.

Make us strong to do your will in all things.

O God, may the kingdoms of this world soak up the values of your kingdom; may their leaders and their peoples uphold what is right and just, and establish a social order which is rooted in Godly love.

Make us strong to do your will in all things.

O God, in all the heartaches and joys of human relationships, may we be governed by selfless love, faithful and forgiving like you, without limit.

Make us strong to do your will in all things.

O God, draw alongside all who suffer that they may know the comfort of your presence and the healing power of your forgiving love.

Make us strong to do your will in all things.

O God, we give you thanks that the Messiah has come to save your people.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna! We will open our hearts to his faithfulness.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna! We will stand beside those who are crucified today.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna! We will work with those who bear his name.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna! We will thank God for our Saviour, Jesus Christ!

Lord Jesus Christ, you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant, and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation; give us the courage to follow you and to proclaim you as Lord and King, to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.