

Compline in Holy Week

Zachariah 12:10. Psalm 139 : 1-18

Here we are at the start of Holy week, and we will all have been observing Lent in different ways. Ways which may involve giving up or taking up, abstinence or activity.

In the Psalm we are reminded that God knows what we have been doing – that God has always known our destiny, even before we were born. That imagery of having woven us or knit us when we were still in the womb. And we remember that Jesus knew his destiny long before the events of holy week began to unfold, and despite the inability of the disciples to comprehend what he was telling them.

We are reminded that we cannot escape God's notice – whatever or wherever he will know. But Zachariah gave God's people and therefore us, hope. Jerusalem was promised deliverance, there would be a spirit of prayer and repentance. In particular those who feared God were assured of God's mercy. That all sounds more New Testament than Old, certainly a foretaste of what was to come.

Those who feared God were assured of God's mercy. Those who observe Lent will be assured of the joy of Easter and the hope of resurrection.

Zachariah was writing about four centuries before the birth of Christ, the Jews had returned from exile and needed encouragement to rebuild both the temple and their own lives. It is easy to imagine that they felt hopeless, that there was nothing they could do to improve their lot. It is easy hearing the news at the present time to feel that there is nothing we can do to make the world a better place. And yet the coming of Christ changed that for them and for us.

As we progress through the events of Holy week we can try to walk with Christ to appreciate the servitude, to feel his horror and stoicism as he faced crucifixion, and to understand the price that he paid for us. We don't talk of being God fearing in the modern world but we are no less God's people and we, each of us, individually are promised God's mercy.

We will each be approaching Easter in different ways, hence the differences in the worship that we are offering this week. We will feel the pain of Good Friday in different ways, but whether we are abstainers or people who take on something extra we can all be assured of the resurrection – there will be joy on Easter morning.

Intercessions

God of Holy week. Yesterday we joyfully remembered your entry into Jerusalem with palms and singing. The King who rode a donkey. When times are hard and there seems little we can do, help us to recapture and share that palm Sunday joy with those around us.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

God of Holy week. You entered the temple and castigated the money changers. Sometimes the secular world seems to be at odds with your kingdom. Help us to understand the differences and to work towards reconciliation between different opinions and viewpoints, spreading your love into unlikely places.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

God of Holy week. You made yourself a servant and washed the disciples' feet. Help us to take on the role of servants to each other and to those outside the church. To understand that we don't need big gestures but that small acts of love can mean so much. We pray for tomorrow's Welcome café and all that people from our parish do within our community.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

God of Holy week. You made for us the ultimate sacrifice – dying on a cross – taking our guilt and pain. We pray for people in pain tonight, through physical or mental illness, poverty or loneliness and ask you to wrap your arms around them so that they can feel that they are not alone.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

God of Holy week. We give thanks that we can look forward to Sunday with the promise of resurrection, and hope not just for the joy of Easter morning but for all our futures.

Merciful Father

Accept these prayers

For the sake of your Son

Our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen