

REFLECTIONS

For the crowds in Jerusalem, it was holiday time. A tense time indeed under Roman occupation, but for ordinary people a time of pilgrimage, time off work, and a chance to see this controversial new preacher entering the city. It was easy to get swept up in the excitement in a crowd that was in danger of becoming out of control. Yet there is more here than a warning about the fickleness of public opinion.

For Jesus was very much in control, not caught up by events, or surprised when they were to turn against him. He was making a point, fulfilling Hebrew scripture (Zechariah 9:9). He made careful preparation in practical terms of arranging the room in which to celebrate with his disciples. And spiritually this was the control of a man going willingly to his death to fulfil his unique mission. From a period of time when Jesus was active – teaching and healing – he now enters a time when he is vulnerable and helpless.

Jesus both accepted and embraced passivity and helplessness in this final week before his death. He knew that this was the place from which new life would come, and he had absolute trust in God, his Father.

Going deeper

Jesus is 'handed over' to the authorities. This neutral phrase is apparently a better translation of the Greek than the word 'betrayed'. In our lives there are times when we are, through circumstances, handed over into the control of others or of events. Jesus' acceptance of suffering and helplessness has much to teach us in a society where we value our independence. A crisis – even of ordinary personal illness, but especially in the current situation - makes us feel helpless, which is deeply uncomfortable. It is very hard to accept that we are not in charge of our own fate and our futures.

I wonder...

If we can ask God's help to trust Him through the current crisis, and to see it as the place from which new life will eventually come.

The Grapevine

COVERING THE PARISHES OF SAFFRON WALDEN, WIMBISH, DEBDEN, ASHDON AND HADSTOCK.

Palm Sunday
5th April 2020

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross: grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Gospel: Matthew 27:11-54

Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus said, 'You say so.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. Then Pilate said to him, 'Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?' But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?' For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him, 'Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him.' Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.' Pilate said to them, 'Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?' All of them said, 'Let him be crucified!' Then he asked, 'Why, what evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!' So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' Then the people as a whole answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.' Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, 'You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, "I am God's Son." The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way. From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'This man is calling for Elijah.' At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.' Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'

BIBLE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

Palm Sun 5th	Morning Psalm 31 9 to 18 & Matthew 26 14 to end of 27 Evening Psalm 80
Mon 6th	Morning Psalm 41 & Luke 22 1-13 Evening Psalm 25
Tues 7th	Morning Psalm 27 & Luke 22 24-53 Evening Psalm 55 13 - 24
Wed 8th	Morning Psalm 102 & Luke 22 54 to end Evening Psalm 88
Maunder Thurs 9th	Morning Psalm 42 & 43, & Luke 23 1-25 Evening Psalm 39 Liturgy : 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 John 13:1-17, 31b-35
Good Fri 10th	Morning Psalm 69 & Hebrews 10 1-10 Evening Psalms 130 & 143 Devotion: Isaiah 53 John 19:16b-end.
Easter Eve Sat 11th	Morning Psalm 116 & 1 John 5 5-12 Evening Psalm 142



See St Mary's church, SW, website at www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org to find out more.



Please 'Like' our Facebook page so we reach more people! Click on the link on our website, or go to: www.facebook.com/saintmaryschurchsaffronwalden

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Churches Together Prayer Cycle: In April please pray for: **St Mary's Church of England, St Mary's C of Primary School**
The family and friends of those who have died recently:
Moira Johnston Dick

EVENTS

WITH APOLOGIES, PLEASE NOTE THAT DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS ALL EVENTS ARE SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

NEWS

Revd. Dr Caroline Currer has been appointed **TEAM VICAR**, with responsibility for Ashdon. *Barbara Marshall*

Due to the current circumstances, **THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR A NEW TEAM RECTOR IS NOW PAUSED**. The vacancy will continue to be advertised on both the St Mary's website and the Diocesan website, though the interview process will take place at a later date, as soon as it is feasible.

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

I have just been appointed Team Vicar with responsibility for the village of Ashdon. These are strange times indeed as I cannot be licensed formally or move to the village due to current restrictions. This is just one small version of the interruption that we are all experiencing in our hopes and plans. These range from the minor things we are used to having in the diary, such as a hairdresser's appointment, or a meal with friends or family, to enormous disruptions to peoples' work, plans, lives and livelihood. I was able last week to take one of the last funeral services to happen in All Saints church before it closed, but the wedding planned in Ashdon for May is not now going ahead, and we all feel for those couples throughout the Team who are facing the same issue.

Yet a lot is happening instead, both in our local communities and in the Church. I am introducing myself to folk in Ashdon by calling all on the electoral roll. This gives a chance to check how they are as well as to say hello. On-line resources are growing in number – a splendid local weekly service that you can access on youtube via both the St Mary's and All Saints websites or participate in live via Zoom (more details on the next page), and now the Diocese of Chelmsford (www.chelmsford.anglican.org) have written a 'spiritual communion' service introduced live on-line by the Bishop.

When we lose the ability to plan for the future, we are forced to live in the present. This is no bad thing for us as Christians, for God is with us right now, wherever we are. We are told His name is 'I am' – not 'I was' or 'I will be'. Yes, we can share with him our regrets about the past, and our hopes and fears for the future, but it is in the stillness of NOW that we come into his presence and pray and are comforted.

With love and prayers
Caroline

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

Heavenly Father, in these uncertain and frightening times be our anchor and our rock. To those anxious for themselves or others, give your peace; and make your loving presence known to those in pain, those who mourn and those close to despair. Give us all loving hearts to reach out to others. We pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

THE TRANSITION PROJECT Whilst the Tuesday clinic is **CANCELLED**, on line support continues – *contact us at* www.transitionproject.co.uk

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

SUPPORTING EACH OTHER DURING THE PERIOD OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

We have a team of church members who are ready to help by

- * Collecting essential shopping and medical supplies
- * Providing a regular friendly chat by phone. If you are self-isolating and would like some support or, if you would like to be part of the team who can help, please contact the Parish Office by telephone or email. *Judith Hasler*

PARISH OFFICE The Parish Office is now closed to visitors. Dawn is working from home and contactable by telephone and email as usual. You can view the church and parish room diaries and lots of other useful information on the church website.

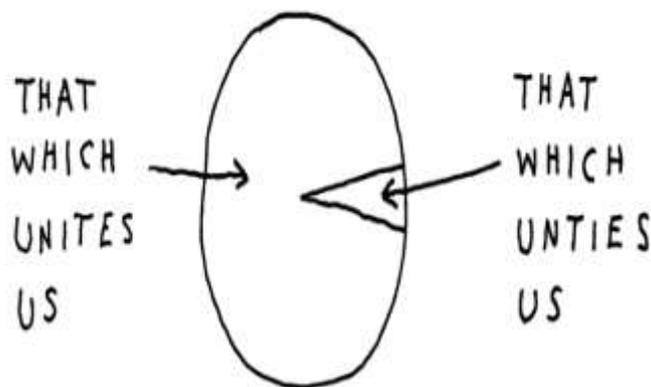
ALL CHURCHES IN THE TEAM REMAIN CLOSED until further notice in accordance with national guidelines.

WEEKLY EMAIL We plan to issue email bulletins which will highlight information from the website, attach the Grapevine and service sheet and provide the Zoom links for live services that weekend. Please email Dawn at office@stmaryssaffronwalden.org if you would like to be added to the distribution list.

GIVING Members of Saffron Walden stewardship scheme may put their collection in the Parish Office postbox if they wish – please use your usual numbered envelope or a yellow gift aid envelope so that our treasurer can identify it to you. Thank you. *David Birchall*

SUNDAY WORSHIP There are several ways of joining in our team worship on Sunday which can be accessed from links on St Mary's Church at Home webpage. * You can watch a pre-recorded 30 minute Act of Worship led by Revd. Alex Jeewan on youtube at any time after Friday, * You can participate in live Zoom Services led from various locations in the team. The service sheet used for these services and Grapevine are also available on the webpage. If you would like technical help in setting up Zoom, please contact Gerald Gardner gerald.gardner@ntlworld.com or Steve Hasler s.hasler@btopenworld.com before Sunday.

CARTOON BY DAVE WALKER



CartoonChurch.com

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