

**Monday in Holy Week**  
**Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021**



Dear Friends,

***‘Then the LORD God took soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.’***

(Genesis 2: 7)

Palm Sunday heralds Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem and marks the beginning of Holy Week. We are reaching the climax of the Church’s year as we commemorate what our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, did for us.

Each day of this ‘great week,’ you will receive a meditation from a member of our Ministry Team. Their thoughts allow us to reflect on this sacred time - remembering what it means for humankind to have allowed God’s greatest gift to the world to be betrayed, humiliated, falsely accused and left to die on a cross by those who professed to love Him. It is a time for us to think deeply about where each of us are in this bleak reality of God’s created people and our capacity to ignore the weak, the vulnerable and the poor whom Jesus came to liberate.

Today we hear from Charlotte Nash, LLM, as she takes us back to our very beginning in God’s love.

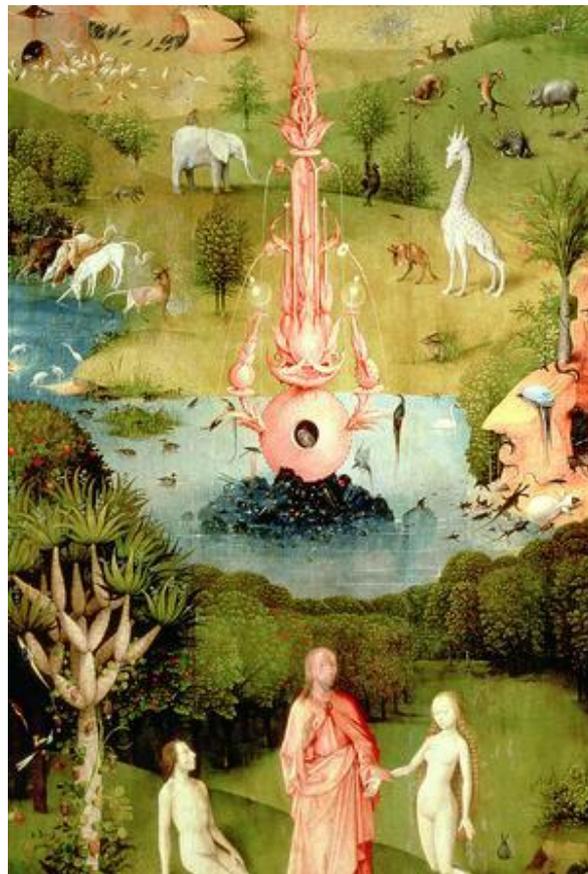
Yours, in the Passion of Christ,

Jax

**Revd Jax Machin**, Rector, The Downs Benefice

## **Monday in Holy Week - Journeying through Lent** **Charlotte Nash, LLM**

We live in a remarkable world. Throughout the ages people have spent much time reflecting and thinking about how our planet came into being. The beginning of the book of Genesis gives us two accounts of creation, written by two writers from different times in history, and from the style of their writing we know they were storytellers and poets. They were people who listened to a trail of ancient wisdom going back through the ages. They listened to nature as they observed the sunrise, the changing seasons and the night skies. They watched. They wondered. They listened to God's creative spirit. They held a profound wonder at creation and saw everything as part of a God blessed harmony.



***'The Joining of Adam and Eve' Left Panel from the triptych, 'The Garden of Earthly Delights,' by Hieronymus Bosch***

The Garden of Eden was a garden like none other, a garden of paradise, filled with trees and plants bearing good fruit, and where Adam and Eve enjoyed being in God's company. In the middle of the garden stood the tree of the 'knowledge of good and evil' and God told Adam and Eve that whilst they could enjoy everything in the garden they were not to eat the fruit from this tree. Sadly, not content with all the good things God had provided, Adam and Eve were tempted and ate the forbidden fruit. At that point everything changed. Their wrongdoing separated them from God, they felt shame, and they hid. They made their choice as we all do, for right or wrong.

Lent is a time when we make our spiritual journey towards another tree, as we follow Jesus into Jerusalem to the cross. The cross was a place of great suffering, shame, humiliation and a gruesome death. Yet, Jesus resolutely set his face towards Jerusalem, knowing what would happen.



***'The Fall of Man' by Adi Holzer***

The tree in the Garden of Eden brought consequences, it brought separation from God. At the cross God reaches out through his beloved Son to restore our relationship with Him. In the Old Testament people would take animals to the Temple and offer them as blood sacrifices to atone for their sins. At the Cross, God sent his only Son to die for our sins, for all our wrong choices, that through his precious blood shed on the cross we may have forgiveness. As Jesus bore the weight of our sin he cried out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

In the Garden of Eden humanity's relationship with God was broken. At the cross God restores our relationship through the sacrificial death of his son Jesus Christ. The cross becomes a symbol, not of shame but of forgiveness; not of death but of life; for at the cross even death was defeated, Jesus was raised to life, our sin is paid for, and he promises us eternal life in him.



***'Mosaic of the Garden of Eden and Christ the Good Shepherd'  
at the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna, Italy'***

This season of Lent has been a time of preparation in our spiritual journey with Christ towards Good Friday and the joy of Easter Sunday. As we arrive on Monday of Holy Week, we are given a particular time to listen to God, as did those early writers; to look at the choices we make, and to be filled with the wonder of creation which is especially beautiful in the spring.

*May God who sent his Son to die for us  
Teach us, renew us and assure us of  
His eternal love in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Amen*

### **Genesis 2: 4-9 - The Garden of Eden**

When the LORD God made the universe, there were no plants on the earth and no seeds had sprouted, because he had not sent any rain, and there was no one to cultivate the land; but water would come up from beneath the surface and water the ground.

Then the LORD God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.

Then the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the East, and there he put the man he had formed. He made all kinds of beautiful trees grow there and produce good fruit. In the middle of the garden stood the tree that gives life and the tree that gives knowledge of good and evil.