

Tuesday in Holy Week
Tuesday, 30th March 2021



Dear Friends,

‘How excellent is thy mercy, O God: and the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings’. How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.’
(Psalm 36: 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, Alastair Barron deepens our understanding of Christ’s sacrificial love as we draw closer to the Paschal Triduum which celebrates the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Yours, in the Passion of Christ,

Jax

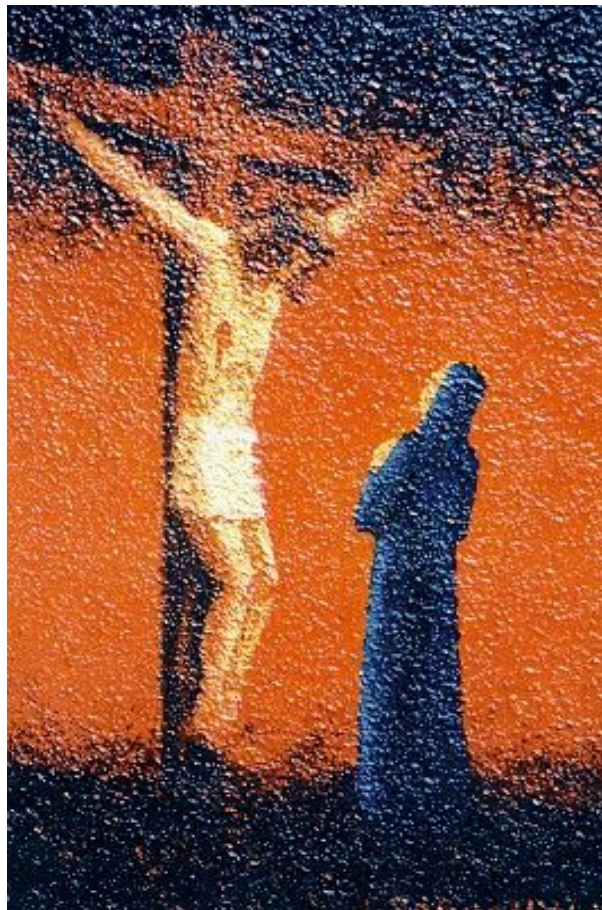
Revd Jax Machin, Rector, The Downs Benefice

Tuesday in Holy Week – Place our Trust in Jesus’ Sacrificial Love **Alastair Barron**

The psalmist tells us *‘How excellent is thy mercy, O God: and the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings’. How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.’*

‘Put their trust’ – significant words, I think, words that lie at the heart of our belief in God, his omnipotence and love.

After the period of Lent in which we challenged ourselves, our faith and our trust in God, we are now in Holy Week, those last few days before we again read the narrative of Jesus’s Passion. This week we will remember Jesus’s whole ministry being demonstrated in a single gesture to the disciples when he took up the bowl and the towel at the Last Supper – the example of his love, his humility being shown in an almost mundane yet hugely significant way. We will remember Judas’s betrayal and Jesus’s arrest and trial, the pain of the slips and falls as Jesus carried the heavy cross to Golgotha before being helped by Simon. We will remember the hours of excruciating agony of the crucifixion and the despair of Jesus’s Mother at her son’s violent death.



‘For we hold that man is justified and made upright by faith independent of and distinctly apart from good deeds.’ (Romans 3:28) by Ladislav Záborský

All for us the most extraordinary sacrifice.

And then, perhaps the most extraordinary thing, the scriptures will tell us again of God's defeat of death through the raising of His son, our saviour Jesus Christ, from his tomb. The bandages of the tomb are left behind. Angels sit waiting to tell the good news of his raising from the dead. A week of betrayal, pain and suffering ending in the glory of the risen Lord all so we might live.

All for us the most extraordinary gift.

Which takes me to those wonderful verses in Paul's letter to the Colossians written about 30 years after Jesus's death, written when Paul was under house arrest in Rome, a prisoner of the political regime. Paul's purpose was to counter the false teaching by some spreading falsehoods to the church community in Colossae, in order to convince the Church there of Christ's supremacy –

'He is before all things', Paul writes, 'and in him, all things hold together'.

Particularly in the context of Holy Week and the sacrifice of what God asked of His Son, our reading today struck me as the most wonderful articulation of what God asks of us.

'...clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience.' Paul writes. 'Above all, clothe yourselves with love

Consider those qualities in the context of the last supper and of Christ's passion, in the example he set in Holy Week. These are the qualities God asks us to bring to our relationship with him, with our brothers and sisters in Christ, with our enemies even and so to our ministry as Christians, as disciples.



'Ecce Homo' by Antonio Ciseri

So, as we reflect on this morning of Holy week in these strange and testing times, and moving forward from the challenges of Lent, our challenge now is how to be compassionate, kind, humble, meek and patient. We probably have to look at ourselves, at the way we live, at the moments when we may be crabby, a little short tempered with people, perhaps a little full of ourselves and just see if we could or should do things differently.

This is all good in itself but even further than this, Paul instructs 'And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him'. We don't just have to live these qualities or even show these qualities to others, we must do so in the name of Christ and through him, show them in God's name. We must openly live our faith so others may see us as active Christians, trusting as Christ did on the cross, so others may know God's love, his grace and his mercy. In this way, and as Paul says, we will let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts and experience the harmony that can only exist between God and human through Jesus Christ, his son and our example. Amen.

*Father God,
You promised a Messiah and He came, just as You said.
We trust that we can count on His promised return when we will join Him forever.
Make us people whose word can be trusted, and who are faithful, in love,
to You, to our families, and to our neighbours.
Increase our faith and boldness to proclaim the truth of Jesus to the world.
In His Name, we pray.
Amen.*



'Lenten Labyrinth' by Mike Moyers

Psalm 36: 5-12

Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your judgments are like the great deep;
you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.

How excellent is thy mercy, O God : and the children of men shall put their trust
under the shadow of thy wings. How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.
For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

O continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your salvation to the upright of heart!
Do not let the foot of the arrogant tread on me,
or the hand of the wicked drive me away.
There the evildoers lie prostrate;
they are thrust down, unable to rise.



Colossians 3: 12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.