

Lectionary readings: Mark 11: 1-11; Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29; Philippians 2: 5-11; Mark 14: 1 - 15: 47 (Palm Sunday and Passion)

For reflection and prayer

- **Mark 11:** This was the day when Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, signifying He was coming in peace. The crowd cheered Him, but within a week they would be shouting, 'Crucify him!' How easy it is for us to sing God's praises when all is well, and then when trouble assails us, we can very quickly turn to blaming God. Let's follow Jesus through this week that we call 'Holy Week' and accompany Jesus all the way, noticing how we feel as we see the cost of His unconditional love for us.
- **Psalm 118:** v1: *'Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His faithful love endures for ever.'* Can we repeat this verse no matter what we are going through, giving thanks to God, and finding His presence real to us, even when things are going badly for us? v24: *'This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.'* Can we rejoice even when the day holds pain, suffering, disappointment, deep loss, devastation? *'This moment is as perfect as it can be.'* (Richard Rohr) Do we really believe that God is in this moment, in every moment?
- **Philippians 2:** Jesus experienced all that it means to be human, including suffering, betrayal, rejection, deep hurt, death. He showed us what it means to live in God, in the power of His Spirit, to triumph over suffering and death, not by running from them, but by embracing

them in the power of the Spirit of God. Jesus showed us what it means to be fully human - open to God, single-mindedly dedicated to Him, letting go of all self-centredness, selfish ambition, clinging to nothing except God. We might like to gaze on Jesus this week and let Him give us a new vision of what we are called to be.

- **Mark 14-15:** This is the story of Jesus' passion. I suggest you read it through at a sitting and then go back and reflect on each incident. Be with the woman who poured her perfume sacrificially on Jesus, and reflect on your own giving of yourself to God. Be with Jesus and His disciples in the 'spacious' room which had been prepared for the Passover meal, and reflect on whether you are clearing a spacious place for God in your heart and life. Be present at this gathering and notice how you feel. Let Jesus pass the bread and wine to you. Is there anything you want to say to Him at this moment? Be present in Gethsemane and see Jesus suffering intense inner pain. How do you feel as you watch Him. Can you say, *'I want your will, not mine'*? Be with the crowd as they shout for Jesus' death. Where are you in the crowd? What are you shouting? Do you turn against Jesus when He doesn't fit in with your plans? Be with Jesus as He hangs on the cross. Hear Him say, *'My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?'* Reflect on times when you have felt abandoned by God. Might it be that when we feel God is absent He is most present? These are just some suggestions for your reflection as you follow Jesus through His suffering and death. There is so much to reflect on in these verses. Let them come alive for you and let God speak to you where you are.