

Worship at Home Service for Palm Sunday 2nd April 2023 with Revd Francis M'Itiri

Opening Prayers:

Let us Pray

Merciful Lord, you came to live among us, and went ahead to endure the shameful betrayal, mockery, and violence, for our salvation. In your unfailing love, Lord hear our cries and fill us with your hope, that we may become strong in heart and learn to trust in you, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

STF 633: My soul finds rest in God alone

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGOMfE5TaC8>

My soul finds rest in God alone,
My rock and my salvation;
A fortress strong against my foes,
And I will not be shaken.
Though lips may bless, and hearts may curse,
And lies like arrows pierce me,
I'll fix my heart on righteousness,
I'll look to Him who hears me.

*O praise Him, hallelujah,
my delight and my reward;
Everlasting, never failing,
My Redeemer, my God.*

My soul finds rest, in God alone
amid the world's temptations;
when evil seeks to take a hold
I'll cling to my salvation.
Though riches come and riches go,
do not set your heart upon them;
the fields of hope in which I sow
are harvested in heaven.

I'll set my gaze on God alone
and trust in Him completely;
with every day pour out my soul
And he will prove his mercy.
Though life is but a fleeting breath,
a sigh too brief to measure,
My King has crushed the curse of death
and I am his forever.

Readings: Matthew 21: 1-11, Isaiah 50: 4-9a Matthew 26:14:27:11-54

Reflection thoughts of the day.

The liturgy for the 6th Sunday in Lent opens the Holy Week in two parts,

firstly, it focuses on Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and secondly, it points to the lengthy reading of the Passion. In that, we are then drawn to reflect more on the gathering, and the unique march/procession of victory of the new king, the new ruler, the new herald. The gospel of Matthew sets a big religio-political statement. And from the onset, both passages inform us that Jesus was a wise strategist leader. He planned and executed his entry into Jerusalem making a resounding statement when he preferred a donkey as his means of transport rather than a horse. The crowd however would not be stopped in displaying openly their true loyalty as demonstrated in their high-spirited reception, the heroic shout, and the throwing of their cloaks as a "red carpet" for Jesus to walk through. I wonder what might have been going on in the mind of the bystanders.

Let us look at this from a leadership strategist point of view. There is no victory that is brought by a silver platter. Considerable cost must be borne. Apostle Paul mentions in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, Ephesian 6:12, Zachariah 4:6, believers' weapons are spiritual ones responsible in dealing with every kind of stronghold and principalities opposed to God's will. Jesus and his disciples conquered Jerusalem not by threats, bullying, insults, or a hate campaign, but by a sacrifice of humility and obedience. There is a cost in everything. In 2 Samuel 24:24b, reads, "*But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."* This strategy by Jesus establishes a profound theological foundation on conflict resolutions and peace building initiatives. The master was humble, soon he will be washing the feet of even those who planned his destruction. Matthew 26:14–27:66 or Matthew 27:11–54, Jesus concludes his life in ministry on earth with a cry of lament that lifts unto God in thanksgiving. This is portrayed in Isaiah 50:4–7, "*I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.*" for those who carry many wounds of persecutions can learn something from Jesus. He did not wage war back to those who mistreated him Jesus was ashamed,

but his trust was beyond human commendation. Today he remains our symbol of hope and promise.

This should make believers alive to his promise. The tragedy in the Palm and triumphal entry into Jerusalem was the Passion, the shouts of hosanna will soon fade, silence and darkness will cover the earth, and the bells of mockery and betrayal to the truth will demand Barabbas, an embodiment of evil, than Christ the Saviour. What a sad moment for the entire human race! May our Lord graciously shine our hearts to follow that which is right and denounce persistence of the evil.

Prayers of intercessions

Loving Lord, we meet in prayer to pray for those escaping dangers and are likely to be affected by the new 2023 UK immigration bill should parliament pass it into a law.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.

We pray for those experiencing the effects of climate change due to our misuse of our gifts. We pray for the multinational companies, that, they might learn to put the safety and protection of our world before profit and for world leaders to find new, just, and radical agreements that will protect our fragile humanity.

Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer

Merciful God, we pray for those coming from a fragile and broken world. As we gather to pray together, touch the hearts of all those in responsible positions of leadership who have the vision and expertise to bring about justice and peace in the world. Help us all your children with the heart to selflessly contribute wealth and resources in areas stricken with shameful poverty and severe hardship, so that all efforts might result in a world that is functional working together in harmony.

Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer

God of Mercy, we pray for young families, children, and those young people about to do their GCSE exam during the summer, those seeking your wise counsel on what to do next with their life.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

We pray for families and young families traveling during this period of the Easter festivities that they will be safe in their going out and coming back.

We pray for other people in our communities working to provide love and care to the sick and vulnerable. Strengthen all families living with issues of mental health. Bring love and understanding.

Lord, in your mercy: Hear our prayer

We remember those who are now with you in heaven, especially we remember their memorial anniversaries. We thank you for the memories brought by their kindness. May they find peace in their eternal rest. **Amen.**

We say together the Lord's Prayer

Come and see: STF 270

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRlz7f0WU1A>

Come and see, come, and see,
Come and see the King of love;
See the purple robe and crown of thorns he wears.

Soldiers mock, rulers sneer
as he lifts the cruel cross;
Lone and friendless now, he climbs towards the hill

*we worship at your feet,
where wrath and mercy meet,
and a guilty world is washed
By love's pure stream.*

*For us he was made sin -oh, help me take it in
Deep wounds of love cry out, 'Father, forgive.'
I worship, I worship
The Lamb who was slain.*

Come and weep, come and mourn
for your sin that pierced him there;
So much deeper than the wounds of thorn and nail.

All our pride, all our greed,
all our fallenness and shame;
And the Lord has laid the punishment on him.

Man of heaven, born to earth
to restore us to your heaven
Here we bow in awe beneath your searching eyes

from your tears comes our joy,
from your death our life shall spring;
by your resurrection power we shall rise.

The grace

May the grace, of our Lord Jesus Christ, the unconditional love of our God the Father, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us now, and for ever more.