

**Prayers of the People**  
**Palm Sunday**  
**March 28, 2021**

Good morning to you all.

For this special Palm Sunday service, we will listen to Mark 15: 25-34, 37-39 as our text.

This is the Crucifixion and Death passage we are familiar with, and it will be combined with the prayers of the people.

When you hear the words, "*You Who are Always With U*", please join George with your response ..."*Hear our prayers.*"

Mark 15 begins with these words: "It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, 'The King of the Jews'. And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left."

In this text, it is illuminating that two others were also included to be crucified, in what could be described as political theatre. We know that crowd pressure, not the severity of the charge, drove the verdict of guilty. From our own current events, such as that of January 6<sup>th</sup>, Myanmar and the Canadian pipeline protests and so many others over the years, political concerns often override common sense, the rule of law, human decency, fairness and the facts. We can ask ourselves, who would we be in these crowds? Could we stand up as Jesus did for his teachings?

*You Who Are Always With Us...Hear Our Prayers*

The text next says: "Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, 'Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!' In the same way, the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.' Those who were crucified with him also taunted him."

Religious and political pressure by nature is incendiary. What of those bystanders who were confused, upset, overridden by the anger and wanting their inner beliefs verified and upheld? Joining that mob made sense, to be in solidarity with their brothers. For a smaller group, perhaps not so cohesive or numerous, it was overwhelming and shocking.

It is disheartening for us learn that some things have not changed in our modern era and in human history. Let us always pray for calmness, let us rely on the rule of law and peace that comes from considering the needs of everyone. Let's make prayerful decisions based on fairness, education and basing our decisions on facts, not personal gain. Let us prosper as a community by doing so. We know it is not easy because change can be hard.

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Our text continues: "When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!'"

Jesus was a courageous leader. His message of God's love had not gotten through to those in power and their followers. He was distraught and felt betrayed and disappointed. He had done what he was asked to do and it wasn't enough. His time was up. But not his teachings. I think in our lives we have all felt that sense of betrayal, anger and all those emotions that come from being in the world. We have felt hard done by, and alone. We may have a serious illness. Been bullied. Treated unfairly. Lost people in our lives. Or things. Experienced deep anger. But we have a rock. God is with us always. Our eyes have been opened where they were closed. The curtain is asunder. As with the Roman soldier, we are changed.

*You Who Are Always With us...Hear Our Prayers.*

Let us say The Lord's Prayer as printed on your screen. As we pray, let us feel gratitude for vaccinations and hope that the Suez Canal is cleared successfully and soon.

Paddy