

**Lectionary**  
Readings for every day  
You Select!



in the HCUC

**No. 3**

**For 9 April 2017**

**Dear Friends**

Today is Palm Sunday. I suspect there are more people in our society who know more about the production of palm oil, its uses and the devastating consequences for native forest and the people, plants and animals of affected areas than the number who can see the relevance of Jesus' riding into Jerusalem on a donkey.

So what is it that keeps the story of Jesus alive and relevant? It's at the centre of our Christian outlook. We know about it! But for over half the seven billion people on earth it is unknown and of little or no significance.

In the tiny bit of space these pages provide I'm not going to try and change the world's situation. (Surprise!) However I tried to discover some aspects of the Palm Sunday events that 'spoke' to me, and are excitingly relevant, and not just stale history 2000 years old.

First I rediscovered the importance of seeing that the four Gospel writers have a particular attitude to what they want to emphasise and how they want to offer their version of the Jesus story. — Palm Sunday—is a useful example.

- Mark does not have a strong focus on celebrating Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Instead he spends verses making sure we know that Jesus spent a lot of effort arranging for him to ride a donkey—not a battle-hardened horse that a triumphant Roman general would use. Jesus makes it very clear that his way is not the way of the sword, but a way of humility, a way of seeming powerlessness. It is the power of soft water that quietly cuts a gorge through rock. No brutal quick-fix, but timeless conviction and patient confidence.
- The other feature of Mark's chapter 11 version is this:- He sets it all in the framework of Jesus' going towards Jerusalem, entering the city and going immediately to the Temple. The temple is the centre of the city, not just as a GPS reading but as the spiritual heart of the Hebrew nation. It embodied in a particular way the Hebrew view (now lost) that the entire universe is one constant expression of creativity, peace, harmony and love.

**Sincerely - Lester**

<b>Holy Week</b>	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Monday 10 April:	36:5-11	Isa 42:1-9	John 12:1-11
Tuesday 11 April:	71:1-14	Isa 49:1-7	John 12:20-36
Wednesday 12 April:	70	Isa 50:4-9a	John 13:21-32
Maundy Thursday 13 April:	116:1-2, 12-19	1 Cor 11:23-26	John 13:1-17, 31b-35
Good Friday 14 April:	22	Isa 52:13-53:12	John 18:1-19:42
Holy Saturday 15 April:	31:1-4, 15-16	1 Peter 4:1-8	John 19:38-42
<b>Sunday 16 April <u>Easter Day</u></b>			
Ps 118:1-2,14-24; Jer 31:1-6; Acts 10:34-43; John 20:1-18			

	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Monday 17 April:	16:1,2,6-end	Acts 2:14,22-32	Matt 28:8-15
Tuesday 18 April:	33:4,5,18-end	Acts 2:36-41	John 20:11-18
Wednesday 19 April:	105:1-9	Acts 3:1-10	Luke 24:13-35
Thursday 20 April:	8	Acts 3:11-end	Luke 24:35-48
Friday 21 April:	118:1-4, 22-26	Acts 4:1-12	John 21:1-14
Saturday 22 April:	118:1-4, 14-21	Acts 4:13-21	Mark 16:9-15
<b>Sunday 23 April <u>Easter 2</u></b>			
Ps 16; Acts 2:14a,22-32; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31			

	<b>Psalm</b>	<b>Epistle/OT</b>	<b>Gospel</b>
Monday 24 April:	2:1-9	Acts 4:23-31	John 3:1-8
Tuesday 25 April:	93	Acts 4:32-end	John 3:7-15
ANZAC Day			
Wednesday 26 April:	119:9-16	Acts 15:35-41	Mark 13:5-13
Thursday 27 April:	34:1,15-end	Acts 5:27-33	John 3:31-end
Friday 28 April:	27:1-5,16,17	Acts 5:34-42	John 6:1-15
Saturday 29 April:	33:1-5,18,19	Acts 6:1-7	John 6:16-21
<b>Sunday 30 April <u>Easter 3</u></b>			
Ps 116:1-4,12-19; Acts 2:14a,36-41; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35			

## A THREE-STEP JOURNEY—BOTH OUTER AND INNER

Mark, in his story, sets out the three (3) visits Jesus makes to the Temple over 3 days. Each has a special feature. But first let's spend time reflecting on how our society and western culture in general couldn't care less for temples. And yet ....

In many ways our shopping malls are our 21st century version of a temple. Notice how the word temple is at the centre of contemplation. In brief, we can say that a temple is a place for meeting the sacred and the eternal, the divine and unseen, the values that sustain and enrich our deepest inner being. So what people see, experience and feel is often a glimpse of what their inner being is missing, longing for and knows is at a deeper dimension than coffee and muffin, new fashions, different shops and spending money. Could it be that there is a sense of belonging, being able to relax into what is greater than their sense of littleness? Could it be that the power to be free to spend money stirs a vague awareness of other deeper powers lurking inside them—such as love, compassion, awareness of beauty in unexpected places and in ordinary faces!

Now a quick look at Jesus' three visits:

- ◆ After the journey into the city Jesus goes directly to the Temple. It doesn't indicate that he came as a visitor, pilgrim or observer. He goes inside, says nothing and then leaves. Is this a first (and necessary) step towards a new situation, and the birth of some significant venture? From a personal point of view it could be the start of an awareness that leads to new values, a new centre within our attitude of head and heart.
- ◆ The second day's visit is placed within the frame of the story of the fig tree. Mark has a habit of doing this to say to the reader—the story framed by the two parts of the fig tree is the really important one. And in this case Jesus' flinging furniture down the front steps over-turning the money tables and stools of those who sold pigeons. It was a torrid and dramatic action. And Jesus does speak (loudly). He says the temple was meant to be a house of prayer, and has become a den of thieves. The whole intention and value of the temple has been subverted by our human weakness to mistake our desire to gain more for our never-satisfied ego and to follow our fears that we may lose what power, possessions, fame and fortune we have. It is all misdirected and needs to end. Is this also what needs to happen in our own inner lives?
- ◆ The third visit involves Jesus in a confrontation with a group including chief priests, teachers of the law, and elders. An angry group who question Jesus' authority. It uncovers the deeper issue—how do we know who is right? (Maybe we will explore that another day.)

## REMEMBER WHO YOU ARE ...

The great Teilhard de Chardin says that sometimes a radical change within us begins as a tiny glimmer. Sometimes more sensed than seen, and from it there is a situation where there is no turning back.

Here are his words:

“Three things, tiny fugitive:  
a song, a sunbeam, a glance ...  
- at first I thought they had entered  
into me in order to remain there,  
and be lost in me.  
On the contrary:  
they took possession of me  
and bore me away.”

Might this be another way to express what happened to Jesus in his first visit to the Temple on Palm Sunday?

Our birth is but a sleep  
and a forgetting:  
The soul that rises with us,  
our Life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
and cometh from afar.  
And not in utter nakedness,  
but trailing clouds of glory  
do we come  
From God,  
who is our home.  
(Wm Wordsworth)

- Our forgetting is ...?  
Forgetting who we are,  
Forgetting our Home,  
Our Source,  
That abides in us,  
Always.

The poet Wordsworth becomes aware that the world is too much with us—and this means that we lose touch with the dimensions of life that underlie our world-focused values of getting and spending.

This is what happened with the Temple worship—it fell victim to the vested interests of priest, teachers, elders!

It has happened all down the centuries—in all religions.

“The world is too much  
with us: late and soon,  
Getting and spending,  
we lay waste to our powers:  
Little we see in Nature  
that is ours.  
We have given our  
hearts away...”

Grace and Peace  
is with  
You,  
Now,  
Always!