



### **The Collect of the Day**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
who, in your tender love  
towards the human race,  
sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ  
to take upon him our flesh  
and to suffer death upon the cross:  
Grant that we may follow the example  
of his patience and humility,  
and also be made partakers of his resurrection;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **The Lent Collect**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
you hate nothing that you have made  
and forgive the sins  
of all those who are penitent:  
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts  
that we, worthily lamenting our sins  
and acknowledging our wretchedness,  
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,  
perfect remission and forgiveness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **The Old Testament Reading**

**Isaiah 50: 4-9a**

<sup>4</sup> The Lord God has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,\*  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning he awakens—  
wakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.  
<sup>5</sup> The Lord God has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious,  
I did not turn backwards.  
<sup>6</sup> I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the  
beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.

<sup>7</sup> The Lord God helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;  
<sup>8</sup> he who vindicates me is near.  
Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.  
Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.  
<sup>9</sup> It is the Lord God who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?  
All of them will wear out like a garment;  
the moth will eat them up.

## The Epistle

### Philippians 2: 5-11

<sup>5</sup>Let the same mind be in you that was\* in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

<sup>8</sup> he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

## The Gospel

### Matthew 21: 1-11

21When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached

Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, <sup>2</sup>saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. <sup>3</sup>If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately.\*' <sup>4</sup>This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

<sup>5</sup> 'Tell the daughter of Zion,

Look, your king is coming to you,

humble, and mounted on a donkey,

and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

<sup>6</sup>The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; <sup>7</sup>they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. <sup>8</sup>A very large crowd\* spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. <sup>9</sup>The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

'Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

<sup>10</sup>When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, 'Who is this?' <sup>11</sup>The crowds were saying, 'This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee.'



## Psalm 118

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
his mercy endures for ever.

2 Let Israel now proclaim,  
'His mercy endures for ever.'

19 Open to me the gates of righteousness,  
that I may enter and give thanks to the Lord.

20 This is the gate of the Lord;  
the righteous shall enter through it.

21 I will give thanks to you, for you have answered  
me  
and have become my salvation.

22 The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the chief cornerstone.

23 This is the Lord's doing,  
and it is marvellous in our eyes.

24 This is the day that the Lord has made;  
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Come, O Lord, and save us we pray.  
Come, Lord, send us now prosperity.

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the  
Lord;  
we bless you from the house of the Lord.

27 The Lord is God; he has given us light;  
link the pilgrims with cords  
right to the horns of the altar.

28 You are my God and I will thank you;  
you are my God and I will exalt you.

29 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;  
his mercy endures for ever.

## Reflections

<sup>5</sup>'Let the same mind be in you that was\* in Christ Jesus..' (Phil.2:5)

One of the most powerful images given to us today in the Gospel reading, is that of a Christ who sets his face on Jerusalem. No doubt there is a sense of great elation at the welcome he receives, yet, let's not forget that this was the Christ who knew the hearts of all people! Regardless of the welcome, Jesus knew what lay ahead and yet allowed the people (many of whom would turn against him within a matter of days!) to celebrate his entry into Jerusalem. How difficult must this have been for him and how heart-breaking to realise that this seemingly supportive crowd would dissipate completely, leaving him alone to suffer death on the cross.

What we witness in this Gospel story is a complete trust in God. The type of trust that is acknowledged in the First Reading from Isaiah today where the writer portrays not only his openness to the teaching of God in the first instance, every morning, but his willingness to hold fast to that teaching in trust; 'I was not rebellious, I did not turn back or hide my face.. the Lord God helps me.. therefore I have set my face like flint.' Such similarities as Jesus 'sets his face towards Jerusalem' in full knowledge of the future.

In these days of great uncertainty and solitude for many, it is my prayer that you let these scriptures sit deeply within your understanding. Not only does God promise to be with us in uncertainty, he also requires that we trust in him with our whole heart and 'set our face' upon him in the knowledge that his hand is at work within this and every situation. It is understandable that we question God's presence or plan in the suffering that is taking place at this time and nobody has an answer to this, but at the very least perhaps we can allow ourselves to think of God as 'receiving' rather than 'taking' the souls who die from Covid 19; to place him in the very midst of the suffering because he willingly walked the road to suffering in the person of Jesus Christ and through him, knows the ravages of this earthly world; to turn our attention on the instant replenishment of this world in its own solitude with us all locked away; where rivers fill with fish and skies return to clear blue? Above all, can we truly recognise the face of Christ in the

resilience of this human race; in our need to reconnect with each other in a new way and in a place where there no longer exists all that drew us apart?

Sometimes the type of trust we read about today from the writer of Isaiah and St. Matthew's Gospel requires all that we have within us. Often waiting and sitting still requires more courage than moving forward. And so, 'may the same mind be in you as was in Christ Jesus' who never took his eyes from God in all that lay ahead of him. Such a joyous Psalm for today. Take time to read and inwardly digest and in doing so, open your heart to the peace of God within these words.

## Prayers (based on the First Reading)

The Lord God has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,\*  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.

### ENCOURAGEMENT

Heavenly Father, at this present time, help us to sustain those around us by our words; to encourage and strengthen others by our talents and wisdom and to be open to the power of your Spirit enabling us to do so.

We remember in particular all those who may be feeling isolated and lonely at this time and those who may have few people in their lives to sustain them ...

Morning by morning he awakens—  
wakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.

### AWARENESS

We give you thanks for the dawn of each new day and for the blessings that surround us, all of which we are now, more than ever, aware of. Help us to listen to your voice and teaching within our hearts and minds this day.

We remember those who awaken this day in grief for the loss of loved ones  
and those who waken in fear of this loss...

I was not rebellious,  
I did not turn backwards.  
<sup>6</sup> I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.

### COURAGE

Father, instil within me so deep a trust in you that, whatever this world may bring, I will have the courage to hold fast with my eyes fixed upon you and your peace in my heart.

We pray for those who are feeling lost at this time and ask that your presence be known to them.

<sup>7</sup> The Lord God helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;

'If God is for us, who can be against us?' Father enable me to experience your presence in my day

therefore I have set my face like flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;  
<sup>8</sup> he who vindicates me is near.

## TRUST

Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.  
Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.  
<sup>9</sup> It is the Lord God who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?  
All of them will wear out like a garment;  
the moth will eat them up.

## UNITY AND STEADFASTNESS

that your presence may increase in me the trust to  
say 'you God are the most powerful force in the  
universe and nothing can take me from you hand.'

'Let us stand up together.' We thank you for the  
unity felt throughout this world as nations come  
together in compassion and a sense of the  
common good. When we consider what is  
temporary in this world and how fragile we are as  
a human race, we remember that your presence  
and strength is eternal and will not  
wear out.

### A Prayer in the Time of the Coronavirus

Almighty and All-loving God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
we pray to you through Christ the Healer  
for those who suffer from the Coronavirus Covid-19  
in Ireland and across the world.  
We pray too for all who reach out to those who mourn the loss  
of each and every person who has died as a result of contracting the  
disease.  
Give wisdom to policymakers,  
skill to healthcare professionals and researchers,  
comfort to everyone in distress  
and a sense of calm to us all in these days of uncertainty and distress.  
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord  
who showed compassion to the outcast,  
acceptance to the rejected  
and love to those to whom no love was shown.  
Amen.

*Archbishop Michael Jackson  
Dublin & Glendalough*

