

Sunday Worship

Rev. Monika Redman BA BD

from the Facebook service posted 5th April 2020

[Click here for Monika's welcome to today's service](#)

PALM
SUNDAY

Let's gather in to each others' and God's presence as we sing (if we can remember the tune) or say together our words of gathering...

Gather us in – the lost and forsaken

Gather us in – the blind and the lame

Call to us now, and we shall awaken,

We shall arise at the sound of your name.

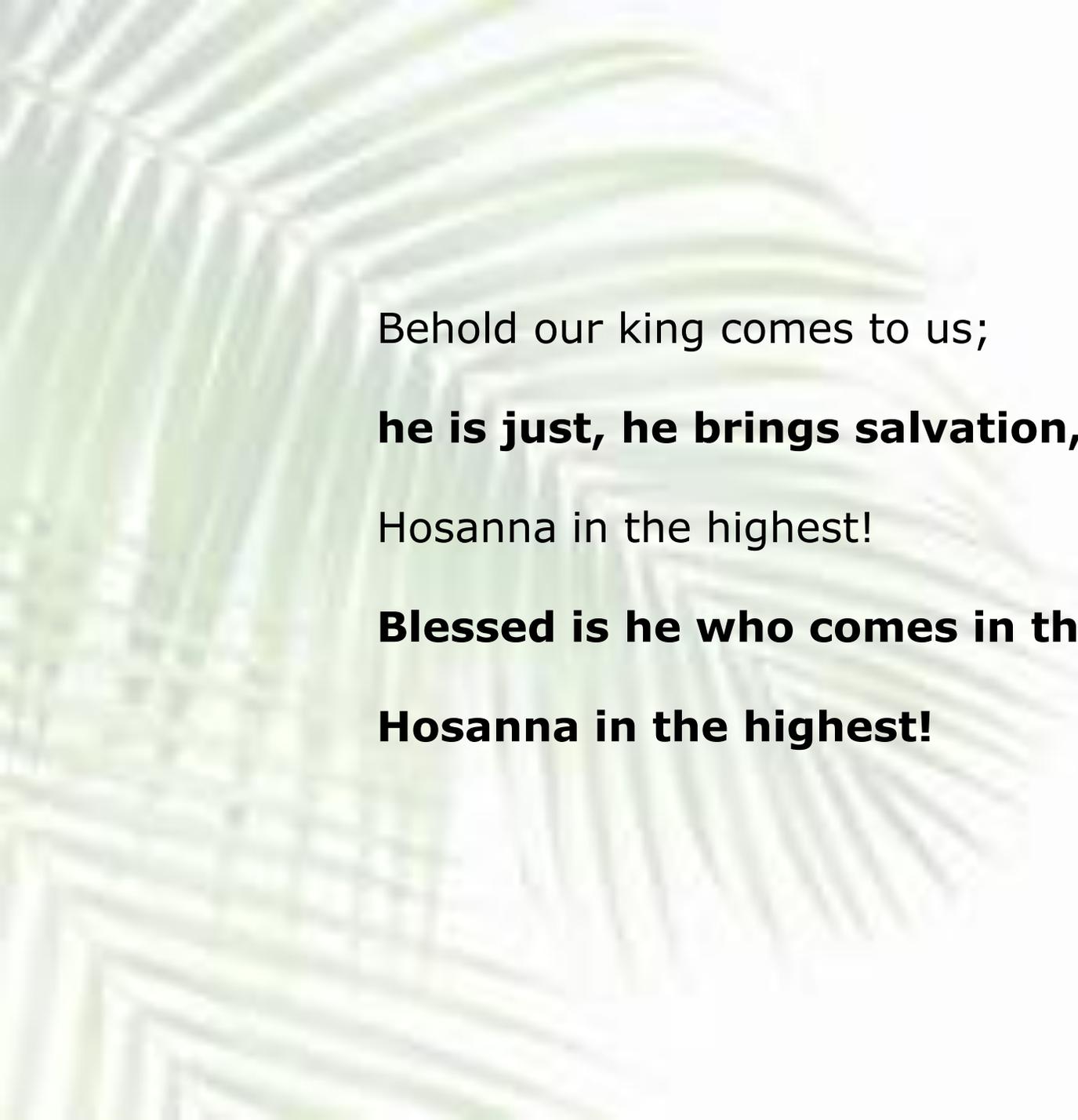
Gather us in and hold us forever,

Gather us in and make us your own;

Gather us in – all peoples together,

Fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

(Paraphrase from CH4 623 Martyr Haugen)



Behold our king comes to us;

he is just, he brings salvation, he brings peace.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

You'll be able to sing our first hymn with gusto - words re-written to the tune 'She'll be coming round the mountain'! (I wish I could see you all singing this in your living rooms this morning...)

He'll be riding on a donkey

When he comes (*Praise God!*) x2

He'll be riding on a donkey,

riding on a donkey,

riding on a donkey

when he comes (*Praise God!*)



**Oh, we'll all go out to meet him
when he comes (*Our King!*) x2**

**Oh, we'll all go out to meet him,
all go out to meet him,
all go out to meet him**

when he comes (*Praise God! Our King!*)



We'll be waving our palm branches

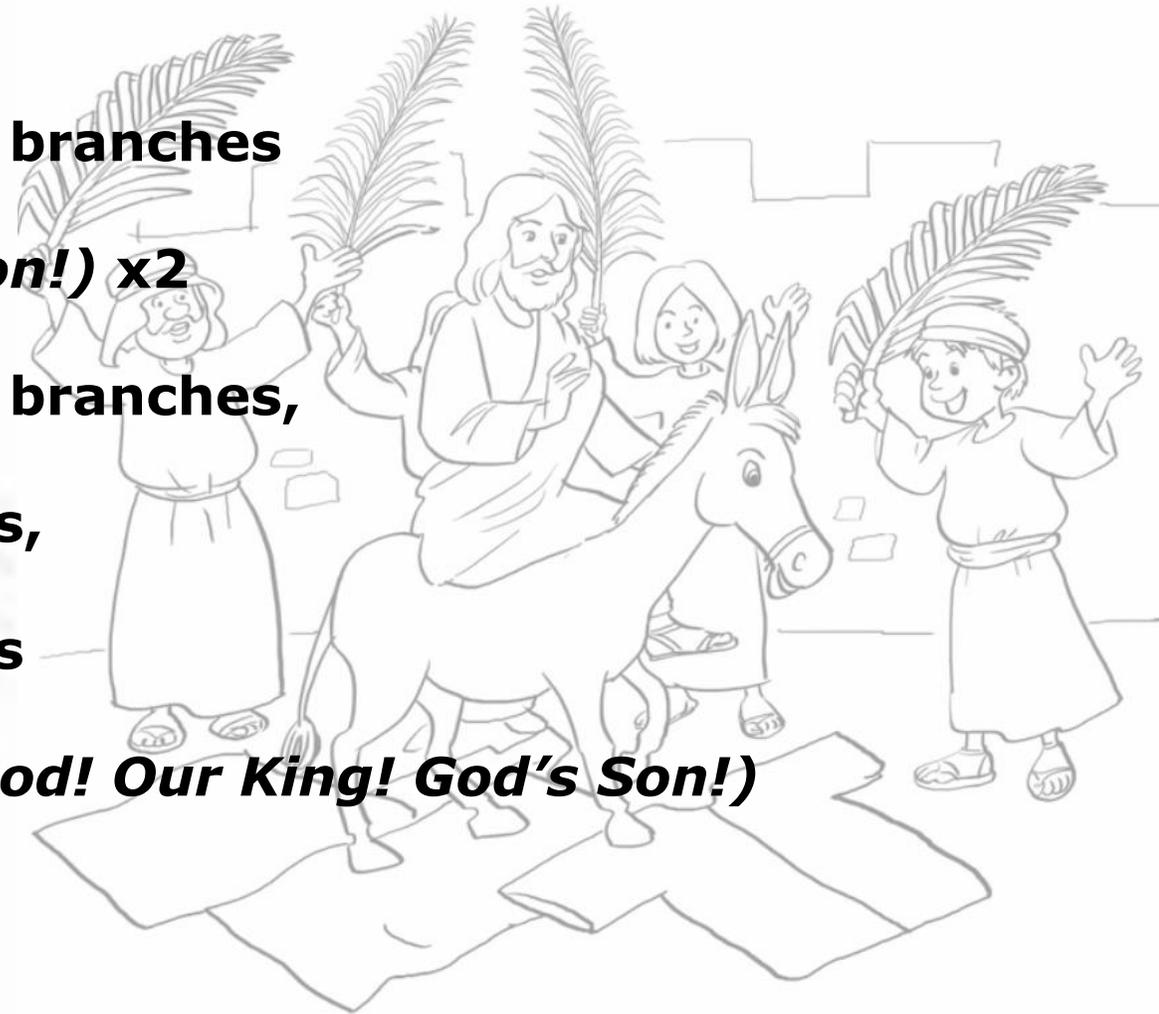
When he comes (*God's Son!*) x2

We'll be waving our palm branches,

waving our palm branches,

waving our palm branches

When he comes (*Praise God! Our King! God's Son!*)



Would we have been among that joyful throng - that day in Jerusalem?

Probably...we love a party!

But would we have followed after Jesus through that whole week?

The Psalmist - all those years earlier - imagined the people of God following the LORD up a hill...his words are the basis of our prayer.

Ps. 24

Who may ascend the hill of the LORD?

Who may stand in his holy place?

Those who have clean hands and pure hearts.

Let us pray...

O living God,

we long to praise you,

to follow after your Son as he leads his people towards you

to ascend to the holy heights where you dwell,

to gaze upon you in adoration and worship...

Your Word promises that those who have clean hands and pure hearts may ascend to your presence...

and this is where the praise falters on our lips,

for we know our hands are stained by this life,

our hearts are dirtied by choices we have made.

But still we see your Son ascend the hill, still we long to follow him...

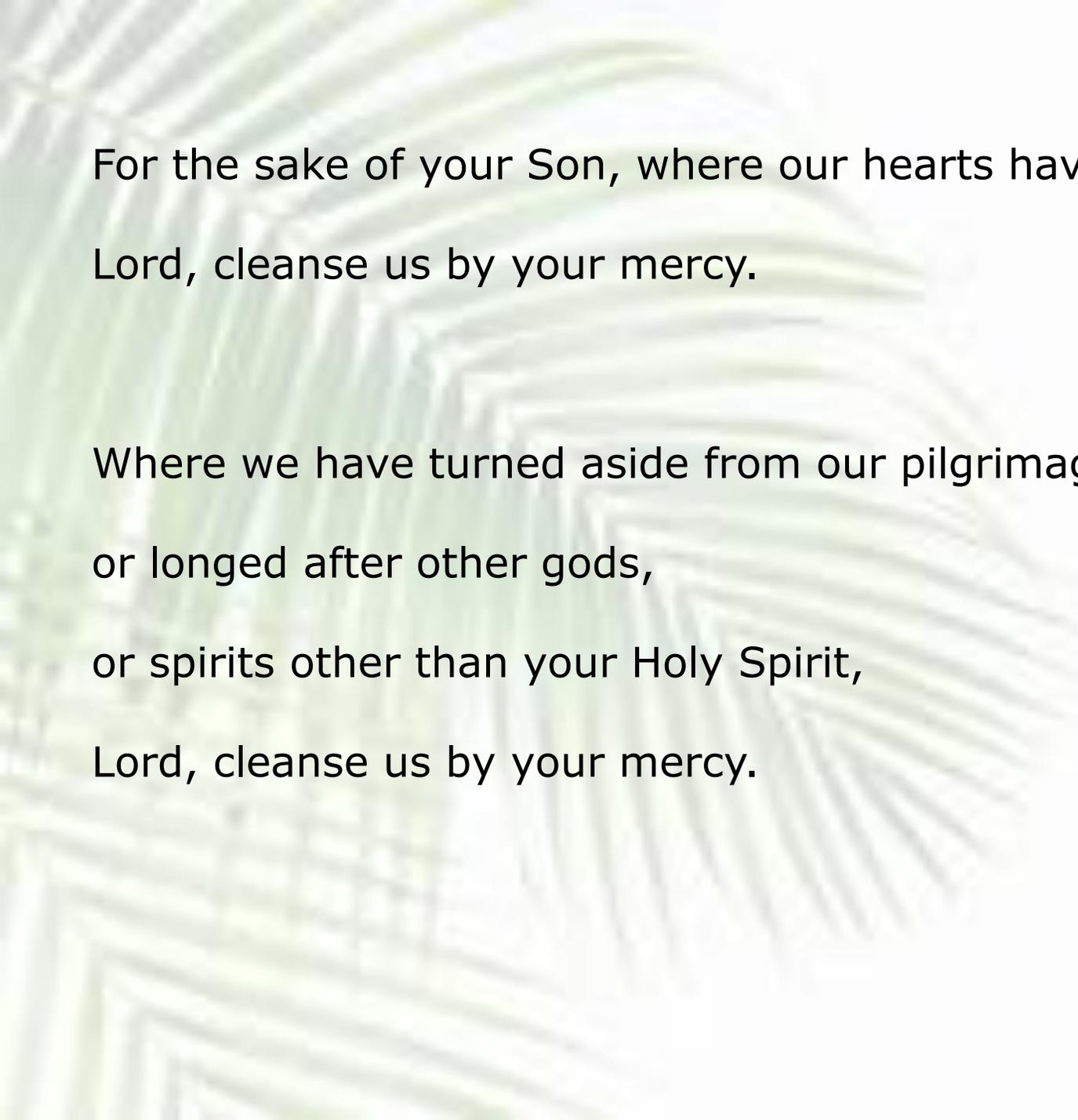
because he climbed the hill to the cross, because he descended into death,
because he rose again and is ascended on high...

we stand in his wake, following his footsteps, to the cross, through his death,
into his resurrection life...

and ask that for his sake, you forgive us...

For the sake of your Son, where we have stretched out our hands in greed, or
lust, or love of money...

Lord, cleanse us by your mercy.



For the sake of your Son, where our hearts have been sullied by pride or resentment,
Lord, cleanse us by your mercy.

Where we have turned aside from our pilgrimage and followed the world's ways,
or longed after other gods,
or spirits other than your Holy Spirit,
Lord, cleanse us by your mercy.

Lord, you forgive the sins of all who turn to you in sincerity;
you cleanse the penitent heart from all uncleanness.

Lord, set our course according to your word
so that we may take up afresh the challenge of the journey of your Son.

Renew our strength this day, that our praise may ascend to your holy hill,
that by your Spirit we might stand in the holy place,
that our courage might be reinvigorated to follow on your way.

We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ,
who taught us when we pray together to say...

*Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors,
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil,
for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever, Amen*

I asked if we would follow Jesus through the events of the following days - it's all too easy to bounce from the euphoria of Palm Sunday crowds and land back down on the joy or Easter Sunday!

But if you want to follow through some of the events of the week, then google Holy Week readings, or if you're a member here at St L's you'll have your last week of Lent readings to follow, as well as a special card arriving in time for Maundy Thursday.

And from Thursday onwards, there will be a service here on the Facebook page and here on the website.

So we still ourselves for our Scripture, by singing our wee verse of preparation...

Be thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;

Naught be all else to me, save that thou art;

Thou my best thought in the day or the night,

Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Mark 15:1-20

- (1) Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.
- (2) "Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate. "You have said so," Jesus replied.
- (3) The chief priests accused him of many things.
- (4) So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of."
- (5) But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.
- (6) Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested.
- (7) A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising.
- (8) The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.
- (9) "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate,
- (10) knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him.

(11) But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

(12) "What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them.

(13) "Crucify him!" they shouted.

(14) "Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

(15) Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

(16) The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers.

(17) They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him.

(18) And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!"

(19) Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him.

(20) And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

Some thinking time...

So if we followed Christ that day, we would walk through the evening of the last meal he had with his disciples, the night vigil in the Garden followed by Jesus' arrest.

And maybe, like all of the disciples except Peter, that would be as far as we would go!

Maybe we would be back the next day? Maybe if we were asked in the words of that haunting spiritual 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord?' we would answer, yes, we were there, in the crowd, trying to conceal our horror

If you are brave enough to read all at once the last chapters of any of the gospels - you will find a pretty awful account of what Jesus was willing to go through for our sakes.

In the joy of spring, the horror and the agony of these days in Jerusalem are pushed to the back of the mind...but these were *awful* days...

A reading of these accounts should be slow, allowing the weight of the injustice done to this man to sink in, allowing our imaginations to shrink back at the thought of the violence; the beatings; the scourging; the degradation; the agony of the cruellest way to kill a person that humans could devise 2000 years ago.

There *should be* an emotional reaction to the reading of these things...just as there would be if we were confronted with some of the horrors perpetrated against many people on Amnesty International's records – whether Christian or not.

Just because we know this story, just because we skim over it every Easter, just because we know the ending...we must not harden our hearts to what was done to a man of flesh and blood – just like us...

And it is important that God became 'just like us' - we celebrate that at Christmas, don't we? The wee babe, born just like us...so that we would know that God does not stand aloof, but stands alongside...actually, stands in our place for us.

How and why is that necessary? CS Lewis gives the best explanation of it at the end of 'The Lion, the witch and the wardrobe', but here's my take on it without the Lion, and using another image of Jesus from Scripture (interesting to note that Scripture uses both the Lion and the Lamb as images of Jesus!)

So, the innocent Lamb of God is sacrificed, and is sacrificed in silence not because he cannot argue his innocence but because someone's blood must be shed for the sins of the world, for my sin, for your sin*...because only innocent blood can be shed on another's behalf...and because he loves us so much that when there is no other way, then he, though "being in very nature God...[nevertheless] humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross."

**and sin is not just the obviously bad things we do, but our general disregard for the values, purposes and ways of God, our ignoring of God, our disdain for the world God created, and the people he loves*

Is an emotional response the right response to these chapters in Mark?

Absolutely...awful things are happening to someone whom we love...

But don't stop there...see the bigger picture – the crashing in of God's Kingdom...see the personal, the eternal significance of what Jesus is going through...what we witness in these last days of Mark's gospel is God's grace, his sovereign, saving presence...this is the love of God in action – doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves...let's respond in gratitude and worship.



**+ COME
SEE**

[HYMN: Come and see \(the King of love\)](#)

Intimations

Hopefully, our members will receive a card in the next day or two with prayers, images and reflections for each of the 4 days at the end of Holy Week. There's also a wee note of explanation - especially for Thursday evening and Sunday morning.

Warning! It will look a little weird when you get it - some of the facets have been printed upside down - so that if you are really clever you'll be able to the correct facet showing for each day!

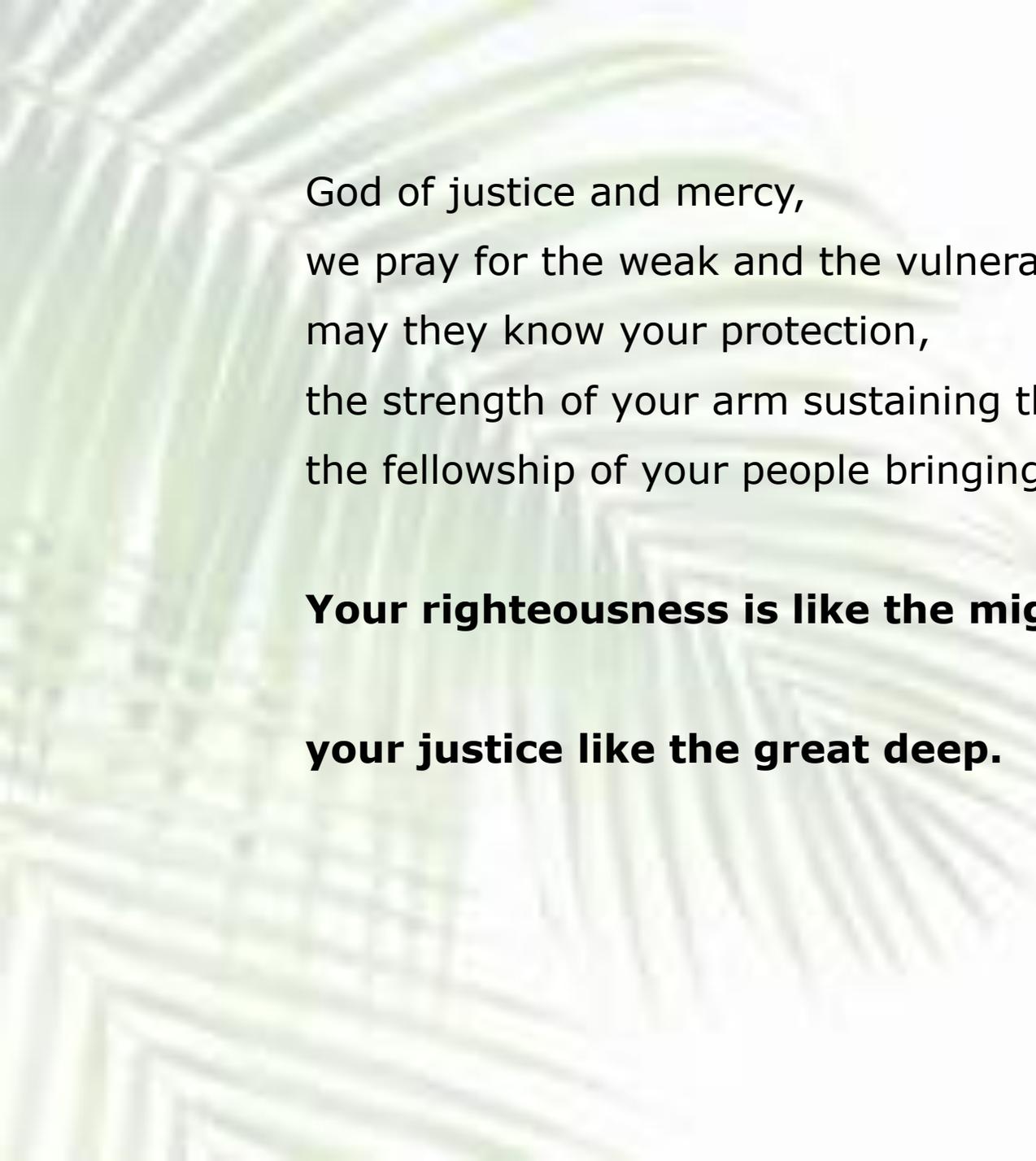
There will also be wee services going up here each day. Start your Maundy Thursday at home at 7pm, and join us back here at 7.30 for the Tenebrae Service of Shadows. Good Friday will also start at 7pm. Holy Saturday you will be able to access whenever you get up on Saturday. And Easter Sunday likewise.

Hope to 'see' you then!

CLOSING PRAYER

God of justice and mercy,
we praise you for the necessity of your justice that cries out against the
injustice of what we do to each other and to ourselves...
and we worship you for the overwhelming grace of your mercy that
causes your justice to pass over your people –

**Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your justice like the great deep.**



God of justice and mercy,
we pray for the weak and the vulnerable in our society...
may they know your protection,
the strength of your arm sustaining them,
the fellowship of your people bringing them your courage.

**Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your justice like the great deep.**

God of justice and mercy,

we pray for the poor in our wealthy society...

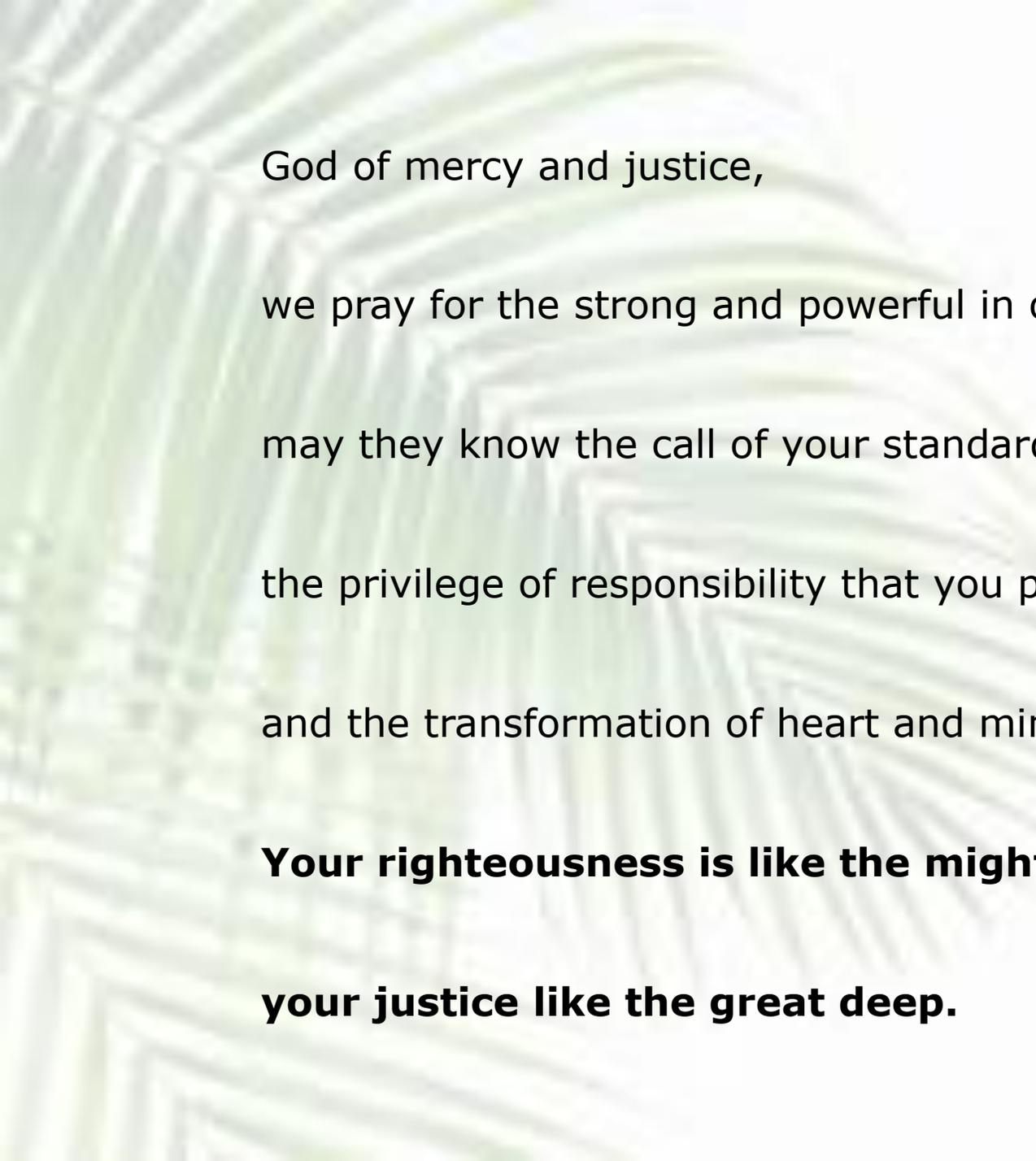
may they know your bountiful provision,

the wonders of your world that include them,

the grace of a society that shares, rather than hoards, all the blessings that you have given us.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,

your justice like the great deep.



God of mercy and justice,

we pray for the strong and powerful in our society,

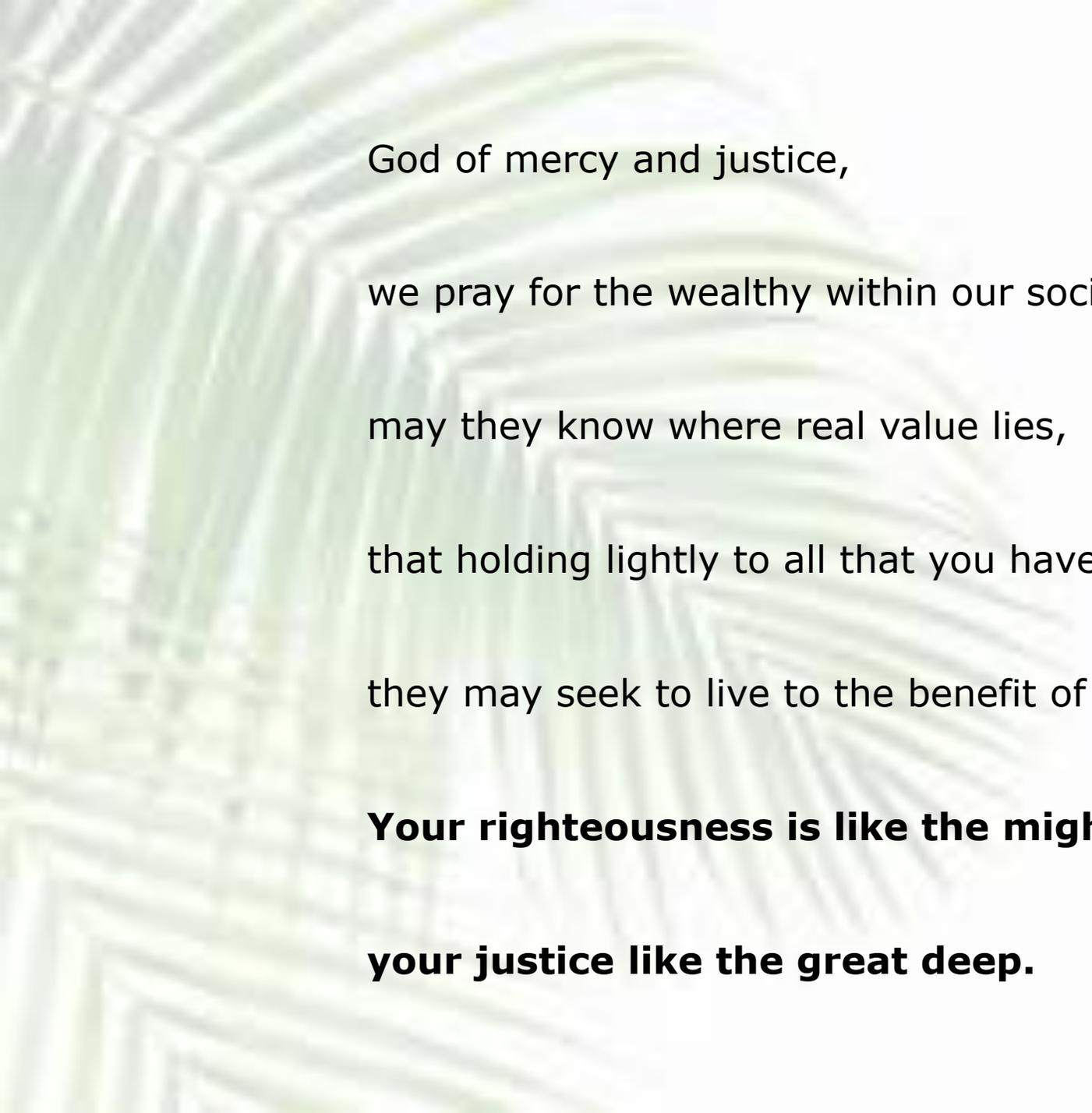
may they know the call of your standards of integrity within their lives,

the privilege of responsibility that you place upon them,

and the transformation of heart and mind that causes them to seek your will.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,

your justice like the great deep.



God of mercy and justice,
we pray for the wealthy within our society,
may they know where real value lies,
that holding lightly to all that you have given them,
they may seek to live to the benefit of others.

**Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your justice like the great deep.**

God of justice, God of mercy,

as we bring before you the weak, the poor, the strong, the wealthy

we bring ourselves before you in their midst.

For there are areas of our lives where we are weak – be our strength,

where we are poor – be all sufficient for us,

where we are strong – be our high standard,

where we are rich – be our serving conscience.

Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,

your justice like the great deep.

Lord God,

we thank you that you are a God who loathes injustice,

but we are also grateful that your justice is tempered with mercy towards us

because your love endures forever.

Glory to the Father,

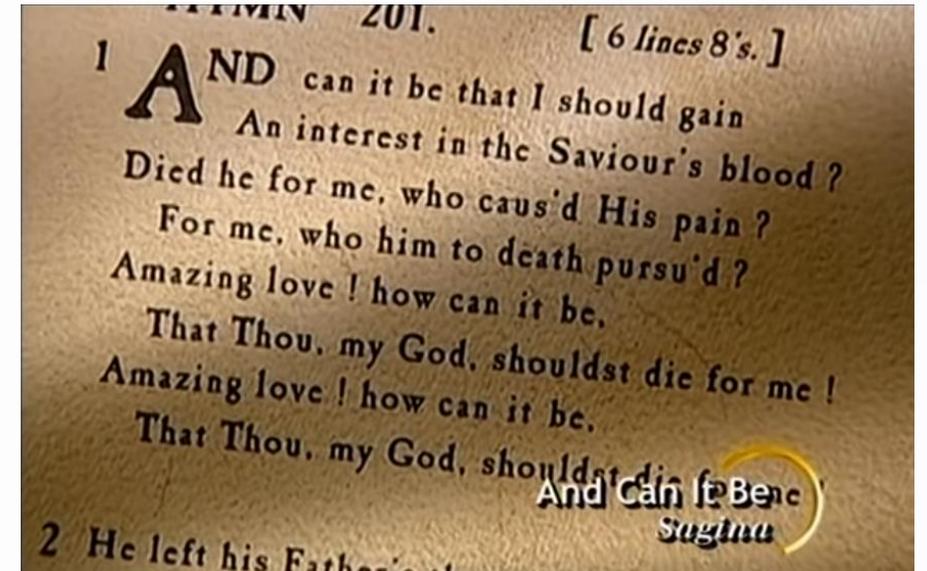
and to the Son,

and to the Holy Spirit:

as it was in the beginning, is now,

and shall be for ever. Amen.

Closing hymn - And can it be that I should gain?



[And can it be that I should gain?](#)

Benediction

May the blessing of Almighty God
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Be with and remain with each and every one of us
Now and forever more.
AMEN.