

Holy Week

at All Hallows By The Tower



Christians worldwide celebrate Holy Week every year, commemorating the last eight days of Jesus' ministry on earth. The time is a sacred one, giving us an opportunity to reflect on and express gratitude to God for the most important events in the history of the world. The week begins on Palm Sunday and ends on Easter Sunday.



Palm Sunday honours the day when Jesus humbly rode into Israel's capital city, cheered as the new King of the Jews—and as the Son of God who would usher in an eternal kingdom. A handful of days later, many who misinterpreted His mission called for His death. Jesus was sent to die by crucifixion on Friday and, through His sacrificial death, paid the price for the sins of humanity. On Sunday, He rose from the dead, proving His claim as the Saviour of the world who had the power to defeat death. Since that day, all who believe He came for that purpose are welcomed as children of God into eternal life.

Palm Sunday (13th April)

Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem

Jesus had been teaching about the kingdom of God and His identity as the Jewish Messiah for about three years when the time came for Him to formally and publicly make that claim in Israel's capital of Jerusalem. When He arrived, people greeted Him with a famous ancient symbol of victory—palm branches. During Palm Sunday services, churches across the world gather to wave palm branches as we recall Jesus' triumphal entry. The leaves can also be dried and woven into small, handheld crosses.

Our Palm Sunday Service begins at 11.50am at St Dunstan's in the East with Blessing of the Palms and reading of the Palm Gospel. The congregation then processes to All Hallows for the second part of the service which includes reading of the Passion Gospel (as a narrative in parts).

Monday of Holy Week (14th April)

The Via Dolorosa

The Stations of the Cross have formed part of Christian devotion for many centuries because they enable us to engage actively with the path of suffering walked by Jesus. They originated when early Christians visited Jerusalem and wanted to follow literally in the footsteps of Jesus, tracing the path from Pilate's house to Calvary. They would pause for prayer and devotion at various points. Eventually those pilgrims brought the practice back to their home countries and ever since then Christians of differing traditions have used this form of devotion.

Our Stations of the Cross service will be held online at 7.00pm. If you would like to join the service, please contact the parish administrator at parish@ahbtt.org.uk.

There is also a Stations of the Cross booklet available in church for visitors to use throughout the season of Lent, including Holy Week. This is a self-guided walk of prayer.

Wednesday of Holy Week (16th April)

“Spy Wednesday”

Jesus' popularity had reached an apex with His entry into Jerusalem, and the Jewish religious leaders ramped up their efforts to rid themselves of Him. On Wednesday, plans were set in motion to capture Jesus and kill Him. The name "Spy Wednesday" is associated with the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot who agreed to betray Jesus to the authorities on this day, leading to Jesus' eventual arrest and crucifixion. The term "spy" reflects the idea that Judas was acting as a betrayer or informant.

Our Taizé service at 6.00pm will reflect on the events of Holy Week that culminated in the crucifixion of Jesus.

Maundy Thursday (17th April)

Jesus washes the feet of his disciples

The word maundy comes from the Latin *mandatum*, from which we get the word “mandate”. The mandate, or command, that this refers to is Jesus' command that His followers love one another. Jesus gave this command to his disciples on the Thursday of Holy Week, when he washed the feet of his disciples and shared bread and wine which he blessed before distributing. He then waited to be arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Our Maundy Thursday service begins at 6.30pm, and uses the Liturgy of the Last Supper including Washing of Feet. At the end of the service the altar is stripped and there is a Vigil of the Watch, in silence until the last person departs.

Good Friday (18th April)

Jesus is crucified

There is a stark contrast between Palm Sunday and Good Friday, with the crowds shouts of “Hosanna!” transformed to “Crucify him!” After Judas betrays Jesus (identifying Him to Roman guards with a kiss), Jesus endures one ordeal after another. First, He is taken to the Jewish high priest, Caiaphas, who is joined by other elders and religious leaders. The Jewish leaders realize that their own laws prohibit them from killing Jesus themselves, so they hand Him over to the Roman governor. Pontius Pilate tells the Jews that he “finds no fault in” Jesus. They convince him to go back inside to speak with Jesus again, leading eventually to Jesus’ death sentence. Jesus is whipped with various sharp, maiming implements, then mocked by soldiers. Finally Jesus is nailed to the cross, where he dies.

Our service begins at 12.00 noon and includes Veneration of the Cross. The Passion of John is read followed by a Proclamation of the Cross.

Easter Day (20th April)

Jesus is risen from the tomb.

Today marks the culmination of the Holy Week timeline. The first Easter morning began quietly. Just like Jesus’ birth, the day involved several unlikely witnesses to a miracle and an appearance and message from an angel. Two of Jesus’ female followers arrive at the tomb to pay their respects. Suddenly, an earthquake rattles the ground, and an angel appears to calm their fears, reminding them of Jesus’ promise to rise again on the third day, and encouraging them to share the good news with the other disciples. Later, Jesus appears to the remaining disciples, further proving His status as the Son of God.

Our service begins at 11.00am with a Service of Light, marking and then lighting the pascal candle. The Exsultet is sung, there is an Easter greeting (with organ fanfare and ringing of bells), then renewal of baptismal vows including sprinkling with holy water.