

The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Holywood Congregation

Rev Ben van Lieshout
3 Stewarts Place
Holywood, Co Down
BT18 9DX
90424254
07974960570
benvl@onetel.com

Newsletter for Holy Week starting with Palm Sunday 28th March.

Dear friends,

As we are approaching Easter we can be full of hope that we are well on the way towards better times.

Infection rates for Covid are much reduced and more importantly there are now very few people getting seriously ill and needing to be hospitalised, especially among those who have been vaccinated.

In our congregation there are now also more and more of us who are protected and therefore unlikely to carry the virus or pass it on.

Our government is taking a very cautious approach to the lifting of restrictions but the current regulations leave us relatively free to chart our own course out of this pandemic.

Most churches have been closed since Christmas but that was by voluntary arrangement.

Now they are opening up in Holy week so for us in Holywood this can also be a time to take a look at our risk assessment and make some changes.

For the time being we will have to continue wearing masks when moving around and for the foreseeable future we will also have to continue with limited numbers.

Singing was not recommended in the guidelines but for Easter we can start to sing again.

Then there is the question of Communion, we need to balance our deep conviction that the sacrament offers us healing on the most fundamental level with the fact that the laws of the material world are not completely suspended when we approach the altar.

But we are emerging from this crisis. I am about to receive the 2nd vaccination, so there is much less likelihood of my spreading the virus, even if I were to become infected and its like that for many of us. So after Easter I will start to share out communion again during the Thursday morning service when we are fewer in number.

No-one should feel under any pressure either to come forward or to stay seated and accompany the process inwardly: this is a personal decision for each of us to take as individuals.

According to the guidelines we will also be allowed to have other events taking place on our premises as long as we comply with distancing guidelines.

So on Easter Sunday we will again have a service and a little Easter festival for the children.

Our community room will now be open again for study groups and other activities (up to 12 people). But we will have to wait with having refreshments; maybe we start with those when the hospitality sector opens up.

In the Camphill communities we are also moving forward, in Mourne Grange we eventually hope to move back from the Hall to the chapel and in Clanabogon we will have our first services since Christmas time during Holy Week.

This will mean that Holywood will return to having fortnightly Sunday services.

But we will continue with the Thursday service so that everyone still has a chance to attend.

And when Glencraig feels ready to have regular services again on Thursdays we may need to move the mid-week service for Holywood to the Wednesday.

I hope that those of you who have been staying at home over the past few months will also feel confident to join us again soon.

Meanwhile, please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Ben van Lieshout

Hollywood

For the Palm Sunday, Good Friday or Easter service please ring (02890424254), text (07974960570) or email (benvl@onetel.com) to book a place as we can only seat 11-13.

Holy week

Palm Sunday 28 th March (Clocks move forward)	The Act of Consecration of Man Followed by the next of a series of short talks on The Act of Consecration of Man as a path; “The Holy week epistle”	10.00
Monday 29 th March	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Tuesday 30 th March	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Wednesday 31 st March	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Good Friday 2 nd April	Evening Service; “The seven words of the cross”	20.00

Easter

Sunday 4 th April	The Act of Consecration of Man The Sunday Service for children and Easter festival	10.00 11.30
------------------------------	--	----------------

Mourne Grange (in Dawn Hall !)

Holy week

Thursday 1 April	Talk: Why did God have to die?	16.00
Saturday 3 rd April	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.15

Clanabogan

Holy week

Maundy Thursday 1 st April	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.30
Good Friday 2 nd April	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.30



The gospel for Palm Sunday is Matthew 21: 1-11

And they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage by the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus sent two disciples ahead and said to them "Go to the village which you see before you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there and her foal with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, tell him that the Lord needs them, and he will let you take them right away."

This took place to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet:
'Say to the daughter of Zion,
Behold, your king comes to you in majesty.
Gentle is He, and He rides on a donkey and on a foal of the beast of burden.'

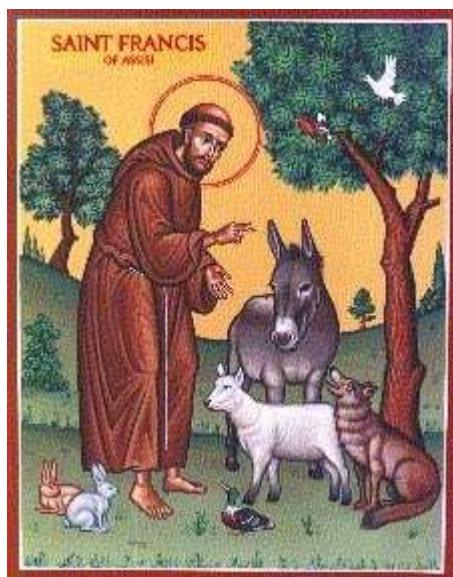
The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the foal, placed their garments on them, and Jesus sat on them.

Many out of the large crowd spread their clothes on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of them and followed Him shouted:

Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is he who comes in the Name and Power of the Lord!
Hosannah in the highest!

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, "Who is he?" The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

A Homily for Palm Sunday



This mysterious picture – Christ Jesus asks for a donkey and its foal to be brought to Him. Upon them He will ride into Jerusalem, the city of peace. Why donkeys? Why two? Francis of Assisi famously called his body Brother Donkey. The donkeys of our bodies are the earthly means of conveyance for our souls and spirits. By nature, the

donkey is stubborn and wilful. For most of us, if the body decides to go somewhere, say, into illness, it is about all we can do to hang on for the ride.

Christ chooses donkeys as His means of conveyance to picture the final phase of His incarnation. He is choosing the human body as the instrument of His final battleground. His triumphal entry into Jerusalem foretells His full entry into the body of Jesus. He rides the donkey of the physical nature, both the old body, and the new immortal one he will inhabit at His resurrection. The people sense this; but their jubilation is premature. These two 'donkeys' are carrying Him where He wants to go – deeper into the body, into the suffering, even into the death that the body offers. Rejoicing will be appropriate days later when the body has been transformed at the Last Supper into a new form; when His suffering has borne fruit; when death has been overthrown because He has wrested human immortality from the death of matter.

His body has become transformed. At the Last Supper and its iterations He wields the power to make bread and wine into His body and blood, so that He can feed us His own immortality. With His help, we too can make our sufferings fruitful. Through our connection with Him, bit by bit, we can build the new body that is not subject to death, the Christ-body that comes to life in us, through us, in our offering.

Lenten Flowers by Kathleen Raine

Primrose, anemone, bluebell, moss
Grow in the Kingdom of the Cross

And the ash-tree's purple bud
Dresses the spear that sheds his blood.

With the thorns that pierce his brow
Soft encircling petals grow

For in each flower the secret lies
Of the tree that crucifies.

Garden by the water clear
All must die who enter here!