

23.3.70 (Holy Week)
5.4.71 [+26]
8.4.76 "

O Domine Jesu Christe (Seluchi: 23/48)

Salvator Mundi (Blow: Vict. Pasch. R 204) **PREFACE of CROSS.**

We enter Holy Week each year with the long gospel of the Passion on Palm Sun. in our minds. This is the big week of the Christian year, when in prayer and public worship, in reading and meditating the good news of Christ's Passion & Resurrection, we are faced with the realities on which our faith is based, and celebrate together what it means to be a Christian, to be assimilated to Christ in his passing through human suffering and death to a new risen life. Some of the most moving religious music has been inspired by the Passion, some of the greatest art, and some of the best spiritual writing. This is a week to savour them. Sympathising with someone, in the fullest sense of that word, is a very personal thing — it means suffering with, feeling with the most intimate emotions of another; and that requires a real knowing of another person. It's easy to understand why Christian piety has paid so much attention to the suffering of Christ, knowing that what He underwent was entirely for our sakes, for all of sinful mankind, to open the way for us, through His love, to the friendship of God forever. Christ's emptying of himself will always be the greatest mystery of human and divine love the world has ever seen; it's for each of us in this Holy Week, to try to understand, to enter into the heart of Jesus as we listen again to the gospel story of His Passion & death, praying to Him for a realisation of what our sins and sinfulness really mean which caused Him such agony and pain because He loves us so much. The significance of yesterday's liturgy of the blessing and procession of palms shouldn't be overlooked, either, while we contemplate our Lord's Passion this week [— so, though it's a bit longer than the music we usually have in these Midday Prayers, I shall like you to listen

Procession of Palms (Psalms: 118: 22-26) R118 6:46

today to a modern piece for Palm Sunday, "Procession of Palms" by Malcolm Williamson **MUSIC - PRAYERS.**

The gospels have been called Passion narratives, with some introductory material. And if you read carefully the accounts St Luke gives in his Acts of the Apostles of the first preaching about Christ, you'll notice that it very much centres on the fact of Christ being rejected, crucified and rising from death. Only afterwards are other details of his life brought in, in connection with the teaching He gave & the signs of divine power He made. The Christian mystery centres on the Person of Him and what He did for mankind in dying & rising again, rather than in a set of teachings or on a moral code (though these are there too). It may be as well to say that our contemplation of Christ in His Passion must never become self-pity. It should lead, rather, to a greater personal knowledge & love of our Lord, and be our inspiration in living a life which is totally centred on Him. This is a very personal affair; but we don't live isolated lives, completely independent of each other — we find Christ today in all our fellow-men, in their needs and joys and sorrows, their suffering. Our prayer & contemplation this week shd. lead us to find Him in them. We must also pray and worship together, socially, as Christians — and this is what the liturgy of this week is. But don't expect the liturgy those days to supply the personal intimacy with Christ in His Passion wh. each of us must find for himself in private prayer. Perhaps this is why people sometimes find the Holy Week liturgy unsatisfying, rote, forgetting or not knowing its function — it's still like the difference between a marriage ceremony & celebration, & the personal feeling for one another of the bride & groom.