

# Message from Bishop Rachel

## 15 April 2025



*Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son...* (Hebrews 1:1-2)

On Friday in Gloucester there will be an enactment of the first Good Friday, [‘The Way of the Cross’](#). I’m sure that even as I write this there are people getting into character, learning their words and finding their voice, because in that first Holy Week, over 2000 years ago, there were many voices of people playing different parts in the narrative as the story unfolded, whether followers of Christ, people in the crowd, Pilate, or a number of other named individuals.

At the beginning of this week, on that first Palm Sunday, there were many jubilant voices proclaiming Jesus as King, but as the week went on there were voices of followers of Christ who betrayed or denied him; a crowd raising their voices in hatred and opposition; and voices of individuals who were fearful or bewildered. Jerusalem was a noisy place to be. So many voices.

This week I have been very aware of voices of both jubilation and protest, whether it be the voices of those participating in various recent sports competitions, or those participating in joyful worship; or those on marches of protest about the steel works in Scunthorpe, war in Gaza, President Trump’s tariffs and more.

When I awoke early on Palm Sunday and heard the news of the Israeli Government’s attack on the Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza, run by the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem, I not only imagined the voices of people shouting and crying, but I immediately raised my own voice in anger and indignation [Gaza: House of Bishops statement on attack on Al Ahli Hospital | The Church of England...](#) I pray our voices will be heard.

Of course, there are so many places in our world facing conflict, oppression and injustice, and so often people’s voices are not being heard or appropriately responded to, whether it was the voices of people under rubble in Myanmar; the voices of those with lived experience of abuse; the voices of starving people in Sudan; marginalised, disabled people unable to speak; terrified people in Goma; silenced girls in Afghanistan, and so many more.

In it all, it’s not surprising that people ask, ‘Where is the voice of God?’

This week, we focus on the truth that God has spoken to us in his son Jesus Christ; and in the power of the Holy Spirit, God goes on speaking to us, in us and through us, albeit often in a still small voice. In those final hours of the events leading to the cross, Jesus Christ seems to be a man of few words, often even silent, yet he is ever present. And at the foot of the cross on Friday we will be silent, and our words will be few, as we sit with our own pain, sin and brokenness, and that of our world close to hand and far away.

And then, as we listen once more to the gospel accounts of Christ’s crucifixion, we will hear the voice of Christ crying out with his final breath ‘It is finished’. God’s work of love has ensured that darkness, despair, and even death will never have the final word.

But I also know that it does not feel like that for many many people, including those patients and staff at Al Ahli hospital. And I find myself this week praying that each of us not only find our voice to name the things of sin and brokenness in our own lives, but also in our world (both near and far). To voice them to God in prayer, and to ask how we wisely and courageously might use our voices publicly in our local contexts.

On Easter day, we will recall the risen Jesus Christ speaking words of hope and peace. Those are hard words for so many across our world to hear and speak, not least those in the land of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection, and we must not speak them lightly. We must also ensure we seek to inhabit them – for ourselves, for those around us and for those across our world. I find this deeply challenging, but I do know that it begins at the foot of the cross with our eyes on the empty tomb.

Thank you for the ministry in which we share. I look forward to being with many across this diocese for the [Chrism Eucharist on Thursday morning](#).

You are in my prayers with thanksgiving. Have a joyous Easter when it comes ... and voice loudly, 'He is risen indeed. Alleluia.'

+ Rachel