

City set for passion play

The drama of Holy Week is coming to the streets of Salisbury this Easter.

A HUGE TORCH-LIT procession involving thousands of people takes place on the streets of Salisbury on Good Friday, April 2. It will feel at the start like a carnival with live music. Exactly what is taking place?

The answer is *The Way of the Cross*, a spectacular re-enactment of the drama of Holy Week from Jesus's entry into Jerusalem through to his crucifixion and resurrection.

It is 10 years since Salisbury last witnessed *The Way of the Cross* and it's still talked about by many local people. It is also the fourth time Jeremy Davies, canon precentor at the cathedral, has directed it. "Thousands of people come to witness and take part in what is arguably the most dramatic and moving story ever told. Christians and those of other faiths or none will be moved by this story of a man with his cross, cruelly abused even though he was both good and innocent. It's a story that still resonates in our world today," Jeremy says.

The cast of a hundred, drawn from the local community, includes 60 soldiers as well as the principal characters – Jesus, the 12 disciples, Mary, Pilate, Herod and the high priests. A large choir of singers and several bands provide

the music that becomes an integral part of the drama, which is narrated by two storytellers. The Bishop of Ramsbury, Stephen Conway, reflects on the events and their significance at each of the 11 scenes along the route.

Jane Dickson is co-director for the third time. "This production is bigger than ever, the team effort is extraordinary and the support and enthusiasm an experience in itself. The good will and determination of the actors and the incredibly moving experience of watching the results of months of work make me realise how fortunate I am to be so involved.

"We have a new script, original music, beautiful banners, new props and sets, choirs and bands hard at practice, the army providing a sound system, Raynet providing radio equipment and operators for the evening, and many churches providing assistance in every way imaginable. We will also be relying on the help of the police, army, local council, city centre management and the emergency services. Salisbury is soon to witness something which once seen will never be forgotten."

Jason Waite, liturgical chaplain to the Bishop of Salisbury, plays the role of Jesus. "*The Way of the Cross* will be a fantastic spectacle which we hope will bring the whole community together whatever the weather conditions on the night! I have no formal acting experience or training, and I generally try to avoid the spotlight, so

playing Jesus is quite daunting! It promises to be an emotional and moving day for performers and audience alike."

The Way of the Cross begins at 7pm in the High Street and reaches the Cathedral Close 90 minutes later via a mile and a half route through the city streets. The final scene takes place in the cathedral at about 9.30pm. Why not make a note in your diary to come to Salisbury on Good Friday and be part of the drama? For details visit www.thewayofthecross2010.com. WL

Cathedral events at Easter

Bach's Mass in B Minor,

Saturday, March 27, 7.30pm

Salisbury Musical Society and Chelsea Opera Group Orchestra are joined by soloists. Tickets from 01722 320333.

Liturgy of the Palms, a procession and the Eucharist of the Passion,

Palm Sunday, 28 March, 10.30am

Holy Week devotions,

March 29 and 30, 7.30pm

The Bishop of Salisbury talks about *St John Passion*, and Bach's own faith.

Bach's St John Passion, March 31

Salisbury Cathedral Choir and Sarum Orchestra perform *St John Passion*. Telephone 01722 320333.

The Good Friday devotion,

April 2, noon to 1.30pm

Led by the Bishop of Sherborne, Dr Graham Kings, who also preaches at the Liturgy of Good Friday at 1.30pm. At 4pm there is a special service for children and their families.

The Way of the Cross,

Good Friday, April 2, 7pm

Starts in the High Street.

Easter Day, April 4

At 5am the bishop presides at the Dawn Liturgy which starts on the lawn at the West Front of the cathedral where a large bonfire is lit. Breakfast follows, tickets £3.50 (children free) from Susan Branch, 01794 340204. The Eucharist and blessing of the Easter garden is at 10.30am with Mozart's *Coronation Mass* sung by the cathedral choir.

For full information visit www.salisburycathedral.org.uk.



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Below: A similar event taking place in Germany