

A Reflection on Matthew 21 1-11 The Triumphal Entry

The story which begins on Palm Sunday is basically a human drama. As Jesus enters into his final week, he takes us all with him and continues to do so every Easter. We are not just remembering an historical event that happened over two thousand years ago. We are celebrating and taking part in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as it happens today for us.

His entry into the city begins on a huge wave of optimism, joy and hope. The people line the streets; they wave palms, they put their cloaks and garments on the ground and they shout out his name. This was an ancient Roman tradition used to welcome soldiers and armies' home after their success in battle. The crowd welcome Jesus in a similar way as they shout out, *Hosanna, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

Then, so quickly the crowd changed and turned on Jesus. The same people who were happy to welcome him with shouts of joy, will soon begin to shout '*Crucify him, Crucify him.*' Jesus is even betrayed and denied by his closest friends. The rest of them run and desert him. He is left alone.

There is a real danger that we do not get the liturgy of Palm Sunday and indeed the whole of Holy week just right. If we are not careful, we can lose sight of what we should be remembering, celebrating and taking part in. As well as celebrating this great week with dignity and reverence, we also need to ask ourselves what it is all about and what it means to each one of us.

Where am I in this drama that begins on Palm Sunday and plays out over Holy Week and which comes to a climax on Easter Sunday? Where am I as Jesus passes by on the donkey? Am I one of the crowd shouting out his name? Am I like Judas in any way? When have I betrayed others or Jesus? When like Peter, have I denied knowing Jesus? Am I like Pilate when I judge and condemn others? How am I like Simon who helped Jesus in his time of need?

Having stood with the crowd shouting out his name and welcoming Jesus, will I stand with the same people spitting out insults as I shout '*Crucify him! Crucify him!*'

As we celebrate Palm Sunday and begin our journey through Holy Week, we are called to ask ourselves who and where we are in the crowd. This is a week to pray and then decide what kind of followers of Christ we are going to be.

During this busy week of prayer, let us not lose sight of what we are remembering, celebrating and talking part in.

As we begin this most holy of weeks, may Jesus be our constant companion. May we enter in the mystery of Jesus' life, death and resurrection with faith and hope.

As we continue through this trying time, and do our best coping with the Coronavirus, may we be like Jesus and reach out to those who need our help, our families, our friends, our neighbours. God bless. Colin