

Reflection for Palm Sunday

By Revd Sue Strutt

On this day the Church commemorates Christ's entry into Jerusalem to accomplish his saving work by dying and rising again.

The Scriptures themselves tell the story. It is the culmination of Christ's ministry. His goodness and popularity with the people were challenged by those who thought they knew better than Jesus about God's ways. The words he spoke were truly those of God who he called Father; his actions were to show God's love to the poor, the sick, the sinful, and the homeless, all of whom were despised by the Jewish leaders of the day and the Romans who occupied the country.

Jesus made no distinction between anyone who needed his help – poor and rich alike, if they had the humility and desire to seek God's truth, he helped them. He knew them for who they were and had insight into human nature.

This made him very unpopular with High Priests, Pharisees and other orthodox Jews. He challenged them on their customs and rigid rules – who was clean or unclean, what could be done on the Sabbath, who was sinful and could be forgiven.....and so on. He upset them by showing them the error of their ways and how they distorted God's message, and he upset them by attracting a huge following.

Now, the day we know as Palm Sunday, he was being hailed as a king – not what anyone in a leadership role wanted to see. They feared losing their power and influence over the people, and they feared for the finances of the Temple after he threw out the moneylenders and sellers of merchandise. No wonder they wanted rid of him.

Jesus knew in advance of his procession through the streets of Jerusalem what would happen to him, but he had to go anyway. His mission was, and is, to change the world.

So, you see, politics were at play even then. By colluding to crucify Jesus the Jewish leaders and the Romans actually proved the point Jesus was trying to make which was look to your heavenly Father for peace and justice. Neither wealth nor worldly power brings harmony to societies and their citizens.

Many people crave tranquility, but others equally wish for disharmony. Jesus gave us several signposts to God – Justice, Love, Spirituality, Beauty, Freedom, Truth and, yes, Power, to name some. We humans take these values, however, and break them, corrupt them, so the signposts are twisted and distorted and we are taken in the wrong direction.

But for today let us travel on the right path along with Jesus as he gathers our sinfulness to himself and takes it to the Cross.

Sue