

Palm Sunday 2020 style

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Clowns and jugglers will be picking our fruit this Easter. Thus the BBC News headline proclaimed as Circus staff, unable to demonstrate their usual skills, heed the call to pick fruit which will otherwise go to waste. What an upside down world this is!

One of real different emphasises between the Gospels, is the extent to which writers believe that Jesus ministry was a public affair or whether the 'signs' were for the benefit of those whom he made whole but were to be kept under wraps; but there is no such disagreement about Palm Sunday. Jesus entry to Jerusalem was a public act intended to attract public attention.

As he rode into Jerusalem at the start of the Passover celebrations with crowds surrounding him, Jesus was making a statement about his kingship and servanthood. Here was a leader who did not demand allegiance through exercise of power and control mechanisms. His donkey ride emphasised his humility and his kingdom was characterised by self-sacrifice and service to others.

This Palm Sunday will be unlike any other. We his followers, usually on the streets remembering this most public of events, are unable to gather in public at all or even attend worship together. What an upside down world this is! Or is it?

One of the verses which really resonates with me is from Luke's account in Chapter 19 verses 41 and 42 'As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it saying, "If you, even you, had only recognised on this day the things that make for peace". It wasn't terrible sins that led Jesus to the cruelty of the cross but stupid selfish sins of the kind that we all succumb to. The threat of change that we can't handle for example, can lead us to do all sorts of things that we might later regret. Instead of peace and reconciliation we can sow dissention and even outright hatred.

As we weep over the hardship that many in our own world are now suffering, can we concentrate on the things that lead to peace? Those acts of risk taking and self-sacrifice on the front line and the multitude of acts of kindness, will last well after this crisis has passed. New friendships and bonds are being created. It is remarkable that 750000

people have volunteered to help the NHS in its hour of need. Here is a sign of the working of the Kingdom of God; a world not motivated by what you can get but by what you can give. How different things are when we recognise the things that make for peace and respond.

Perhaps this Palm Sunday, which is so different from normal, can be that time when God can really show us a different and more peaceful way of relating to each other and to the world. Jesus donkey ride could be just the symbol we need to make the world a more harmonious and peaceful place.