



St Marylebone
Parish Church

Palm Sunday 2019 10.50am Choral Eucharist

How quickly it turns? How quickly it all falls apart. We have all had moments like that in our lives probably, when things just seem to disintegrate in front of our eyes – health, work, relationships, our sense of ourselves.

Today it's us, we melt away like blossom caught in an April shower.

The fun and expectations of His entry into Jerusalem. We, this morning, just like them, are a gaggle of chatter and laughter and singing. Maybe there are a few hardcore zealots in the crowd hoping that Jesus is about to overthrow the Romans, some who've been with Him for a while now, but many I suspect are just ordinary folk, caught up in the spectacle and fun. Is this the Messiah – God's Saviour – yeah! 'King of David's Line!' Why not?

The same people who will shriek for Him to die. It is the same lips that have sung this morning that will scream 'crucify' in the same excited tone, the same blood rushing to their excited, reddened cheeks.

And this morning the wisdom of the lectionary – the order given for the reading of Scripture throughout the year – puts that firmly in our focus. The Palm Gospel recounts the events of today, but we also hear the whole of the Passion. Right until the cries have finished, and people have wandered away, *bored* by the sight of another dead criminal hanging limp outside the gate. The Lectionary today leaves us in no doubt that we have begun a journey over which we have no control, like a runaway train. This week time is altered. We enter life of a different order altogether. Because, in the next seven days, though we will sleep and eat and

wash as normal; work and chat, and watch telly, and sit on the tube: all those things have become in a very real way, *less real* than the events that have overtaken us.

Just as the Pevensy children found leaving Narnia back to London, they somehow felt that they had left a place that was more real than the world people called 'real'.

So for us, the real life, the real story, the real happenings are *here*. This final journey from the triumphal entry, to the temple precincts, to the table of the Last Supper, and the agony in the garden and arrest, to Pilate's stone pavement and Caiaphas torch-lit court, to prison cell and scourging pillar, to dusty streets and finally to the rubbish heap outside the city where it all comes to its pathetic end. Those are the most real happenings in these next seven days. And everything else that will occupy us is simply a subplot to this. Liturgical time has taken over and replaced GMT or BST. We can cling to the things of the everyday, but that is to cling to unreality. With each living, *full-fat, caffeinated*, living of Holy Week – like a turning screw - we get deeper and deeper into the mystery of life. Each of our three-score years and ten, this Week is at the heart of it all.

So you and I have a choice today. We've come into Jerusalem. We've come in claiming our King, and now with the landscape of the passion before us, our question is, 'will you go with Him?' In fact it is the question that stands before us every day of our lives. It is the question that will stand before us at the hour of our death. And now we are asking it as we approach the hour of His death. 'Will I go with Him?'

This week, in Eucharists Monday to Wednesday, on Thursday night at the Mass of the Last Supper, on Good Friday at the Liturgy of the Passion, and as the light shows the tomb to be empty on Easter Dawn. Will you go with Him? Or will we kid ourselves that we can get a taxi to the finish line? Where will you seek reality and life? Will you go with Him? This week, as in our whole lives, we must choose.