



25 March 2018 – Palm Sunday
Sermon for 8.00am Eucharist at St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Philippians 2: 5-11
The Gospel of Mark 11: 1-11
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!'

Jesus has planned his procession through Jerusalem to the ultimate detail, to claim kingly authority. The disciples and the crowds respond acclaiming him as their kingly Lord. We of course know with the benefit of hindsight that by the end of the week the crowds will be shrieking "Crucify him." Does their present adulation lack sincerity? No!

The crowds have long been awaiting an Israelite King who would establish Israel's supremacy and overthrow all heathen invaders. The problem with the crowd is that they are imagining their kingly Lord in their own image and not the image of God. They think that a Lord of physical human strategy and strength will force the Romans out of their Land and so, they are disappointed when, seemingly, Jesus does not press home his advantage and seize power in Jerusalem. Instead, in the gathering darkness, after visiting the Temple, Jesus quietly heads off to the peace of Bethany.

The Israelites were not unique in their aspirations, as every generation has its own leader, whether that's a preferred person or a preferred culture and lifestyle.

What is Jesus' strategy? Wherein lies his strength? It will only be after the resurrection that the disciples will realise the vulnerability of all out-pouring love is a far greater force than physical might. Conquering kings, cultures and lifestyles will always be succeeded by others over the passage of time. God's love, however, is so broad and deep it's offered to all equally and lasts eternally because it's not a threat to governments, principalities or powers but a liberating force for good.

St Paul, as always puts it so well. He reminds the Philippians that Jesus did not exploit the weaknesses of others but emptied himself of his divine power in order to be the Servant King and Saviour of all, to whom every knee should bow.

To what king do we bow our knee?

Amen.