

Sermon for Palm Sunday 2016.

Today is the beginning of Holy Week. It is the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent, known sometimes as the Sunday of the Passion and Palm Sunday.

We began our worship with the liturgy of the palms. The liturgy calls to our mind the time that Jesus entered Jerusalem on a colt to the joy of the gathered crowd.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem he came to the place where he would complete his earthly journey.

If we remember back a bit – 10 chapters in fact - just after the transfiguration of Jesus, it was then that Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem and today he arrives at his destination in triumph.

Now along the way of our travels with him through the gospel narrative, we have learned different things through parables and his many other teachings about the meaning of discipleship, mission and empowerment through communion with God.

Jesus entered Jerusalem alone and on a colt to complete what he set out to do and all that we have learned while we have journeyed with him, will be brought to fruition during his final week in Jerusalem.

Jesus entry into Jerusalem has its own joy and the people spread their coats on the road and a whole multitude of disciples begin to praise God joyfully saying,

“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven.”

The words that speak of him as king, actually summarise Jesus ministry to the people – he is the king who comes in the name of the Lord because he has made the blind see, the lame walk, the crippled whole and the poor rich in fulfilment of scripture.

What is revealed in this summary is that his kingly rule is over the enemies of peace which are – sickness, demons and death.

The joy from the telling and retelling of his ministry throughout the land could not be kept quiet when he arrived in Jerusalem.

Even the stones would have shouted out if the people had been silenced, Luke tells us.

I think it worth the exercise to understand something of the significance of what exactly Jesus was entering when he rode the colt into Jerusalem.

As we know Jerusalem is a city, but what Jesus was entering was more than a geographical position on a map, however grand or culturally significant it was.

What he was entering was a stronghold, it was where all the power behind what he challenged lay.

Luke's gospel proclaims however that Jesus is in control of his journey, for in communion with God, and empowered by divine love he had all the power that he needed.

In Jesus triumphant entry, Luke depicts God's truth, Jesus, with full confidence and inspiration, directly confronting the powerhouse of the old establishment.

The image of Jesus riding into Jerusalem, into this powerhouse on a colt, does not paint a picture of a fierce warrior ready for battle however, but one of the bearer of humility and peace.

What a wonderful and extraordinary vision. Love, Peace and humility riding on a colt ready and willing to do battle.

Who had ever heard of a peace filled battle in those days.

Yet the way of peace is paramount in Luke's gospel and Jesus weeps over the city because Jerusalem had not understood "the things that make for peace."

Out of loving concern Jesus weeps over Jerusalem in contemplating what might happen because of their rejection of the one who brings God's peace.

Now today we are here at the destination, we have arrived with him and the focus turns to ourselves and away from Jesus for we know what happened to him in this place, and the questions press upon us.

Having come thus far with him, are we going to continue on with him?

Are we ready to give ourselves totally to him and arrive at the things that make for peace within ourselves?

Are we ready to live in communion with God and be empowered for our own dying and rising experience ?

Are we ready? Are we willing to join him, and become who we are called to be in him?

May the peace of the Lord be always with you.