**The rule of Christ**

Today we celebrate Palm Sunday--a really magnificent day of celebration. But we also retell the Passion of Christ today, so we have some discomfort as we enter into Holy Week.

With Palm Sunday, we celebrate the joyful entry of Christ into Jerusalem. We hear about those who have gathered in Jerusalem, --to welcome Jesus as he makes his entry.

Up unto this point, Jesus' followers have listened to him. They have questioned him. They have tried to understand him. And, indeed, they have followed him.

For three years Jesus has travelled around Galilee proclaiming the Good News of God's reconciling love. And people have listened. People have been healed. People have been forgiven. People’s lives and livelihoods have been transformed.

But now, as Jesus sets his face to Jerusalem the drama increases. His followers are emboldened. They are ready to make a public statement. They are ready to tell power structures of this world...to tell Caesar...to tell anyone who will listen: This Jesus, who is entering Jerusalem **"is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"**

For them, this is where the greatest love comes from. This is where their loyalty lies. This is their story, this is their song *Hosannah to the King!*

But then, we read about the passion of Christ. We hear the story of Jesus being handed over. And we feel helpless.

Peter denies Jesus. We know it's also our denial.

The same crowd that welcomed Jesus now yells "crucify him!" And we know we are part of that crowd.

It is our story, over and over again.

For we start down the road to following the rule of Christ, and walk in his footsteps, and listen to his love with the best of intentions. We make promises. We know this time we will be faithful.

But we fall short.

And we are forgiven, we are redeemed.

We continue down the road trying to follow the rule of Christ, following in his footsteps, and listening to his love with the best of intentions. We make promises. We know this time we will be faithful.

But we fall short.

And we are forgiven, we are redeemed.

This is our story, this is *our* Song, that because of Holy Week, we know God’s great love in his Son Jesus, we can experience forgiveness and restoration and the freedom to follow again.

The forgiving and loving Christ the King, allows us to know God’s loving grace time and time again as we learn and relearn to devote ourselves and our lives to knowing and following him.

And we are challenged because we see the radical obedience and radical humility in Jesus life and path to death.

And we are reminded, of St Paul's words, that in this world today, WE ARE the Body of Christ. And as such should have “the same mind be in (us) that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross."

And so we humble ourselves before God and each other this Holy week, asking for the grace that we may empty ourselves before God in humble obedience- to live in a manner worthy of the good news. Radical love Radical humility Radical obedience.

This is his story This is our story This is our song Hosannah in the highest.

AMEN

 A prayer from St Augustine

Eternal God, who are the light of the minds that know you, the joy of the hearts that love you and the strength of the wills that serve you; grant us so to know you that we may truly love you and so to love you that we may fully serve you whom to serve is perfect freedom, in Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen.

(With acknowledgements to some ideas from Revd Robert Pace)