

## Address Palm Sunday 2021 Harkstead

*Please know that although I am not in the habit of preaching long sermons, this address is written for our outdoor service, and is therefore exceptionally short!*

When I speak these words,  
May the Father be my guardian,  
The Son be my example,  
And the Holy Spirit be my guide.  
Amen.

So hear we are. Together again. Together to celebrate Palm Sunday. Hosanna!

You all have your traditional palm crosses and I wonder, I wonder what they mean to you.

These plain, bare crosses, blessed and given out today, I think are symbolic bookends to the week we are entering today. They hold together both

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and as they do the cheering crowds. They symbolize the horrors of Good Friday as well as the triumph of Easter Day. And it is where these three come together, that the shivers run over my spine.

The cheering crowds celebrate Jesus entering Jerusalem as they are ready to crown him king. A shame he has not chosen to turn up on war horse or in a chariot, as it would fit the type of king they want. The king they get is a humble king, a king of peace, who rides a colt to represent these values.

I wonder whether they notice that it all doesn't quite add up. The hosanna shouting crowd will in no time whatsoever, turn into a most vicious mob, screaming and shouting to have him killed. According to human standards, Jesus had every right to be bitter, be bitterly disappointed and ready to spew expressions of sheer indignation hanging from that ugly cross.

In stead he utters forgiveness: "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

It is what makes Palm Sunday such a two edged sword. We only know too well the betrayal that is coming. We are gathered here as part of the crowd, singing our hosannas, and holding our palm crosses.

As we clutch our crosses, I wonder how they are going to help us as we travel with Jesus into that last week of his life on earth. Help us to be ready in a couple of days to gather around his cross, to put at his feet the issues, our issues, that got him nailed to that cross in the first place. For what do we need Jesus to utter his words of forgiveness to us?

Entering Holy Week is a privilege we should not take lightly. And I pray that your palm crosses will be a reminder of that privilege this Holy Week and the year ahead. Amen.