

**TFTD 23.27 Friday March 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Your king is coming: Matthew 21.1-17**



**Looking down the steep slope of the Mount of Olives from the Dominus Flevit church.**

**If you look carefully you can just see the donkey!**

**‘Tell the daughter of Zion,  
Look, your king is coming to you,  
humble, and mounted on a donkey,  
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’**

**Matthew 21:5**

**Later this year the streets of London will be lined  
with people cheering for their new King. We will**

see scenes that are in some ways reminiscent of the scenes in Jerusalem all those years ago when Jesus rode into Jerusalem and the crowds who went ahead of him and followed him proclaimed him a prophet.

Matthew provides the interpretation that this happened to fulfil the prophecy that the King would enter Jerusalem, humble and mounted on a donkey. King Charles won't be riding on a donkey of course. But the biggest difference between the two events is that the coronation procession which will take place in London later this year is a state organised event. When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the state was clearly being caught off guard.

In this respect the Palm Sunday procession has more in common with the huge demonstration that took place in London twenty years ago in opposition to the Iraq War. Between 1 and 1 and a half million marched in London that day as millions more marched in cities across the world.

Those demonstrations in 2003 might be considered a failure in that Iraq was invaded a short while afterwards. Did all those people march for

**nothing? And a few days after people sang hosanna to Jesus as he entered Jerusalem in triumph, he was led through that same city, bloodied and beaten, carrying the cross upon which he was to be crucified.**

**So why do we celebrate Palm Sunday, when the triumph of that day was so short-lived?**

**What we are celebrating is the vision of the Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus had proclaimed in Galilee which had ignited the imagination of so many people that they followed him to Jerusalem, the seat of power.**

**The next few days were to see this Kingdom collide with the temporal power that controlled Jerusalem. Jesus continued to triumph in his discourse with the Pharisees and the scribes as the two kingdoms continued to clash. This vision of the Kingdom of Heaven triumphing on earth has continued to inspire the followers of Jesus ever since. We repeatedly see glimpses of the Kingdom on earth as it confronts the evil and corruption of the world.**

**The peace protests of 2003 were a failure in the sense that they did not achieve their immediate objective, and yet by confronting the thinking which led to war, they changed the political landscape of this country for a generation. On an infinitely larger scale, the Palm Sunday procession has shaped our ability to imagine the Kingdom of God drawing people towards it in huge numbers as it confronts the corruption of a broken world.**

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