**Palm/Passion Sunday**

**April 5 2020**

Matthew 21 1-11
"Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord!"

We would stand with the crowd of old who welcomed God's Anointed One but remember how that crowd soon were to turn to baying for His blood. "Crucify Him!"

Hymn: 348 'Ride on, ride on in majesty;
 hark, all the tribes hosanna cry!
 0 Saviour meek, pursue your road
 with palms and scattered garments strowed.

`Ride on, ride on in majesty,
 in lowly pomp ride on to die;
 bow your meek head to mortal pain,
 then take, 0 God, your power and reign!

When our discipleship is faint-hearted and lacks staying power,
0 God, forgive us.
Yes, when all is going well, it is easy to support the way of the Christ, but when the tough times come it is easy to walk away. But You, 0 God, are with us both in the good days and when faith is sorely tried and challenged.
You, 0 God never leave us and will never leave us even to the end of time itself.

God of all time and every place be present now with us in our time and place, struggling in anguish and fear, struggling to find meaning and purpose through our faith as so many others have before us.

Be with us as always in Jesus, in life and in death for there are no boundaries to your love. As the psalmist of old affirms

Thou, Lord, my allotted portion, Thou my cup, Thou dost enlarge my boundaries (Psalm 16:5)

**Reflection**

We are not used to times such as these when control of our world and our way of life is taken out of our hands. When all our taken for granted assumptions about our sophisticated world are shaken as we realise that we are restricted by our quarantine to limitations of eras we thought were left behind in the limited insights and understandings of a pre-scientific world. We have lived in the confidence that "God is in His heaven and all's well with the world" to the point where that dictum is well on the way to being a conviction that God is not even in the picture for the continuing control is virtually in the hands of humanity and its march towards total understanding and control of its dwelling place.

But that arrogance is shaken to the core in the face of a succession of climatic disasters which so much of humankind can do no more than bicker about only to now be followed by a rampant virus that puts us back in much the same world of experience as that of biblical and medieval times, the world of fire and flood and pestilence. Is this reality the reality of the twenty-first century? How can this be?

 I believe this is our opportunity to recognise anew the limitations of a world view that lacks a spiritual dimension and that no longer even pays lip-service to its spiritual foundations as the cynicism and arrogance of self-entitlement and human superiority are being called to account by the evolution of a *rampant virus*.

And so it is that Christians who find themselves now on the fringe of society are to move into their foundation time of remembrance and celebration, the remembrance of the death and Resurrection of Jesus our Lord, the Christ, by being challenged as never before to embrace the reality of human frailty and mortality that Jesus embraced when the fickle crowd of Palm Sunday became the blood-thirsty mob baying for Jesus death. Jesus' uncompromising and resolute commitment to the path to crucifixion surely has a dimension of shared meaning beyond any Easter celebration of previous experience. For we who would affirm that Christ be our light again in Resurrection as the Easter event now calls us to do must affirm this hope without the certainty and hope we have long asserted as ours in the all-conquering world of our supposed superior century.

With that crowd of more than two thousand years ago which welcomed God's Anointed One on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem will we now go on to see in the Crucifixion God's ultimate affirmation of life over even the most horrendous death.

Will our final affirmation in word and in action be that
Christ is our light? For
 Where shall I go from your Spirit?
 Or where shall I flee from your presence?
 If I ascend to heaven, you are there!
 If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
 If I take the wings of the morning
 and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
 even there your hand shall lead me,
 and your right hand shall hold me.
 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me,
 and the light about me be night
 even the darkness is not dark to you
 the night is bright as the day
 for darkness is as light with you.

Search me, 0 God, and know my heart: try me, and know my
 thoughts:

And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way
 everlasting. [Psalm 139:8-12, 23 -24]

The trials and tribulations of our time will surely come to an end. There is light at the end of the tunnel. We as the people of faith in Christ should be at the forefront affirming this.

Hymn 779
 'May the feet of God walk with you and his hand hold you tight.
 May the eye of God rest on you and his ear hear your cry.
 May the smile of God be for you and his breath give you life.
 May the child of God grow in you and his love bring you home.’

Rev Graeme Kerr