



St Marylebone  
*Parish Church*

## **Palm Sunday 11 am**

St Matthew 21.1-11

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.*

Our gospel reading, in more usual times, read before we begin our processions through the Church Garden into the parish church plunges us into the heart of our Lord's Passion and the beginning of the week we have come to call 'Holy'.

Our processions with palms branches and hymns in former times – and in times yet to come - help us to move from today's triumphant shouts of 'Hosanna' towards Good Friday's impassioned cries of 'Crucify'.

We do well to remind ourselves at the start of every Holy Week, that it was the same people who jostled for prime position at the gates of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday who jostled for prime to see Christ carry his cross through the alleyways of Jerusalem of Good Friday to the place of his execution on the Hill of Calvary.

The same men and women and children who welcome Jesus into their city as their long-awaited messiah at the start of this

week are the same men and women and children who in just five days cannot wait to see him ejected through the city gates making his bloody way to Golgotha.

Having mounted Jesus upon a donkey, and strewn his way with palm branches and their coats; the same people, when he passes their way again, trip him up, spit at him and hurl abuse at his torn and bleeding body.

Now, lest we try to distance ourselves too far from the people of Jerusalem, if we are really honest with ourselves, we know, deep in our hearts, and often not so deeply in our words and actions, that we too readily and easily cry 'Hosanna' one moment and 'Crucify' the next.

The glorious, wonderful message of this and every Holy Week, however, is that, no matter what is happening in the world around us, no matter how fickle human nature, no matter how fickle the crowd, no matter how fickle we are, no matter how fickle I am, the permanent, unchanging, fixed point of humanity is the One who, today, rides a donkey in triumph, and who, on Friday, hangs dying from a rough cross of wood.

Hanging in the nave of Peterborough Cathedral is George Pace's magisterial blood red crucifix erected in 1975.

The crucifix bears a great golden twisted Christ by the sculptor Frank Roper. Some of you may well have visited the cathedral and seen it. But underneath the ever-arresting image

of the dying yet triumphant Christ, is the even more arresting Latin statement: STAT CRUX DUM VOLVITUR ORBIS.

The words are taken from the motto of the Carthusian Order of Religious and they translate something like: *“The Cross stands firm whilst the world continually turns or changes”*.

This is the incomparable message of this – as every - Holy Week, of the days which lie ahead of us: the cross, which temporarily holds the world’s saviour on Good Friday, is the still centre around which not just the world but the whole of creation turns; the cross to which Jesus is pinned by cruel and fickle hands, is the still centre about which humanity restlessly tosses and turns; the fixed point about which all the changes and chances of this fleeting, ephemeral world are centred.

Our only true stability, our only peace, our only escape from our restless searching, uneasy jockeying for position and status, comes when we discover that still, fixed point at the heart of the universe; when we discover the crucified, hanging Christ for ourselves; when we decide to take up God’s challenge to us in Jesus and place him, at the very centre of our lives.

Only then will our capricious shouts of ‘Hosanna’ and ‘Crucify’ find any sort of resolution. Only then will we find the rest for which our hearts search and our minds long.

Amen.