

DEACON GEORGE'S HOMILY FOR PASSION SUNDAY



Jesus **organised** all the Passion events, from his entry into Jerusalem, to his gruesome death on a cross at Calvary.

His disciples are told, to go and fetch a specific colt. And being a colt, this meant that no-one had sat on him before, Jesus was the first person to do so. And they were told to cover its back with their clothes, as a makeshift saddle. Jesus entered Jerusalem, not as a king with his entourage, soldiers and musicians, but humbly, riding on a donkey, with his band of followers.

Now, the day before, many of the people had seen Lazarus raised from the dead, so they knew that Jesus was someone special. So, they waved their palm branches, and laid down their cloaks and shouted their “Hosannas” in welcome. But we’ll see later, that all of these people turned and ran, when the going got tough.

Now, let us ask ourselves this question, If Jesus did organise all the passion events, then, did all the Passion events go to plan?

Let us see. Jesus organised the Last Supper, but his disciples talked about betrayal, as if it was someone else, and not me. And then the evening meal ended, with his disciples arguing amongst themselves who is the greatest. Later, in his loneliness, in the garden of Gethsemane ... his friends responded by sleeping. Then he was arrested, by a friend’s kiss. And to make matters worse, he was disowned three times, by the person he chose, to rely on the most. It doesn’t sound very good, so far.

All through his Passion, he was being kicked around ... like a political football.

He was beaten and flogged ... to placate a politician’s conscience.

He was handed over to the mob ... because of political cowardice.

He had to make his own way to the Cross ... without his disciples.

And all the time ... the people watched and stared at him.

Yet, despite all this ... he exercised his talent for forgiveness, right up to the end.

Then he took his last breath ... whilst all his friends were at a safe distance.

So! We ask ourselves! Did the Passion events go to plan? Let us see!

We need to go back in time. Jesus said, “***I have come to fulfil the Law and the Prophets***”. So! What **did** the prophets say?

He was born of a virgin ... as the Prophet Isaiah said would happen.

He was born in Bethlehem ... as the Prophet Micah said he would be.

He came and entered, riding on a donkey ... as the prophet Zechariah said he would.

He received physical suffering and died on a tree ... as the Prophet Isaiah said would happen.

And thus, he made the new covenant, and forgave their sins ... as prophesied by Jeremiah.

And finally he came, and saved his people, to watch over them forever ... as the prophet Ezekiel foresaw.

I could go on and on, quoting the prophets, for they all prophesied the coming, and the Passion, of this person, Jesus.

Today, Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah. For Zechariah prophesied that Jesus would come to us, and, he would fulfil the prophecy, of the Old Testament.

And **yes!** his Passion events **did** go to plan, and truly **were**, the most **successful** planned events, in history. Because he fulfilled the law and the prophets.

Now, let us go back to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. The crowds turned out to meet him, waved their palm branches, and then that was it, they all went home. That was the sum total of their Christian faith. These are what I call, Palm Sunday Christians, their faith lasted ten minutes, the time it took to watch Jesus pass by. Not exactly, a deep rooted faith in Jesus Christ. And for the rest of the week, many of them were shouting, Crucify him! Crucify him!

Jesus is calling us **today**, to come and join with him, in his entry into Jerusalem and wave our palms. But he is also inviting us, to join in his Passion. Jesus is inviting us to **stay with him** this week, and partake of the Easter Triduum. He is asking us to **go public** with our Christian faith. To declare, to this secular world, our allegiance to the Son of God, acclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord. **Or**, on the other hand, we could simply stay at a safe distance, like Palm Sunday only Christians.

When we were baptised, we were given our own cross to bear, and as we grew older we were meant to accept our cross, and carry it. But not just for a week, holy week, but for the rest of our lives.

Yes! there will be suffering in our lives. Hopefully, not as physical as Jesus. There may be illness, loss, loss of friends, family, homes, and jobs. There may be abuse, cruelty, verbal, physical, and rejection, the list goes on. But like Simon of Cyrene, Jesus is always there, next to you, to help **you** with your cross.

We cannot **see** Jesus walking beside us, but he **is** there each day, as we carry our Cross. We can **see** him in the face of everyone we meet. We can **see** him in our prayers. We can **see** him in the Eucharist. And **one** day, we **will all see him**, Face to Face.

Because! we are Easter people, children of the Resurrection. Alleluia!