



Holy Week Reflections

Palm Sunday

Matthew 21:1-11

When the Bible talks about Jesus entering Jerusalem, it's easy to read the bit about the crowd spreading cloaks and branches on the road as them creating a beautiful path for the Messiah. But when I saw how steep the path was, how slippery the cobbles were, how hard it was to walk on (a couple of our party slipped and fell on the way down), I finally felt I understood the reality as well as the theological interpretation. Like Sir Walter Raleigh laying down his cloak so that Queen Elizabeth the First wouldn't get her feet dirty in a puddle, the people were actually creating a safe pathway through the mud and stones for a donkey to carry Jesus without mishap. They wanted him to arrive safely at the Temple, and so they responded practically.

At the moment, we are all concerned with safety, of family, friends and neighbours. Some of us will have to stay indoors to enable others to be safe from us, some of us need to be indoors for our own safety, some of us are able to be out and about, to be hands and feet for others. Whichever category we are in, we can still be part of that crowd, laying cloaks and branches under the hooves of a donkey, so that it won't slip and hurt its precious load.



About these reflections

In January 2019, I was blessed to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to see some of the places where the historical events of Holy Week probably happened. Until I visited, it had never struck me how hard that last week in the city must have been for those essentially rural people. No wonder they walked down the hill from the city and up over the Mount of Olives to the village of Bethany each evening, to be among familiar friends and in a quieter place. No wonder Jesus sought solace and His Father in a garden. Life among stone and brick is hard when trees and soil and water and space are familiar.

Elizabeth Clark (National Rural officer for the Methodist and United Reformed Churches) and I have taken some of the photographs I took on that pilgrimage and reflected on episodes from that last week. These photographs and reflections are what we offer to you now. We are all in unfamiliar territory this week. Our world is changing around us so very quickly. None of us will be quite the same after this experience. We pray that these reflections might help you navigate this challenging Holy Week.

God bless you this Easter.

Revd Claire Maxim, CEO, Arthur Rank Centre

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