

BBC Radio Jersey: Saturday April 5th 2020 Tony Morling

On Thursday night the country united in opening windows and doors of their homes, clapping, cheering and banging pots and pans to signal their support for front-line health workers. The exuberant din of hand clapping, cheering, hoots, bagpipes and whistles resounded along streets that had been eerily hushed for most of the day. It was a glorious expression of solidarity, hope and praise.

Today is Palm Sunday which recalls Christ's entry into Jerusalem when crowds publically expressed their longing for better times. Just as on Thursday night, ordinary folk stepped out of the doors of Jerusalem and honoured a humble servant figure riding on a donkey.

Today, throughout the world millions would normally reenact that scene, but this year is different. No palm crosses handed out in church, no obdurate donkeys delighting children with their non-compliance, no collective singing of the Easter hymn, *Ride on, ride on in majesty*. This year our island church doors are closed. All over the world church doors are closed. Everything is different.

But Covid 19 can't entirely stifle Palm Sunday. What would normally be expressed collectively in church will find voice in private homes, as households read the story of irrepressible courage, the triumphant human spirit and the way of Christ which leads to the cross. Now more than at any time we can find hope in the story of Holy Week which begins with Palm Sunday but will descend into darkness, loss and death. Palm Sunday is the last moment of joy until Easter Day. But it anticipates the empty tomb and new life. It gives hope.

So why not join with many others and form a simple cross and place it in your window alongside those beautiful, bright rainbows as a sign of persistent hope in the face of uncertainty. And if you chose to open your door on Maundy Thursday at 8.00pm and raise noise in praise of our medical staff, might we also recall the noise of that first Palm Sunday when ordinary people lifted their voice in thanksgiving.

Over the coming weeks we will see this awful pandemic continue to wreak havoc upon precious human life. We, like Christ are entering into our own period of suffering and loss. But Palm Sunday points us beyond Good Friday to Easter. There is hope. God is with us- He is with us. The best is yet to come.