

PALM SUNDAY

It might seem an odd thing to do but I think there's something in it! It is a Christmas poem by U.A. Fanthorpe, or is it? What the donkey saw...

The baby Jesus did indeed, as witnessed today, grow up with the donkey as an adult, as Messiah, carried, so painfully slowly, yet faithfully: to Jerusalem and to his Passion. The palms are let go. The wood of the cross now becomes centre stage.

Some of you, I know, find Holy Week too much and I understand how uncomfortable going from place to place or service to service can be. But there is a sense of living and breathing the Passion story when we do just that – outdoors on Palm Sunday and again on Good Friday for our walk of witness through Woodbridge when, unbeknown to many, the 'Thoroughfare' becomes our symbolic 'Via Dolorosa'. Outdoors again on Holy Saturday when we take our light from the Vigil bonfire in a country churchyard.

Surely we have to be as close to our suffering Lord as we can, by his side, and not a spectator at all. We really are part of the drama and story as it unfolds each day this coming week.

And as our challenging, heart-stretching Lent book said so eloquently, we are invited to 'tarry awhile', to stay awake, to contemplate deeply on what it means for each of us to be on that pilgrimage and journey together, which is 'The Way of the Cross.' We are allowed to be silent, to weep, to protest, to sing instead of hiding our emotions and feelings.

And yes, we also have to reach out and help those innocent children in Gaza holding out their empty plates, and give them something to eat and something lasting and beautiful to hope for and pray for: peace instead of cruelty, peace instead of injustice, peace instead of corruption. All the ugliness of Christ's Passion and everything he endured is a story too often repeated and too often allowed to happen, in such a divided world as ours today.

So yes, with that noble donkey we are going places together with Our Lord this week, willingly, lovingly, determinedly - even to the darkest of places, seeking some Resurrection light and Resurrection glory which, finally, **will** dawn, shine, and break free! God promises us that victory and final triumph for all His children.

Amen.