

Today we set the stage...

We begin Holy Week with this recounting of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem

I looked up what "Hosanna" means because although I have sung the songs
and waved the palms for many years now,

I never really knew what Hosanna meant...

For some reason, I thought it was always a title for Jesus

But in fact, it is a very old Hebrew word which means,
"Save! Please!"

The people who surrounded Jesus as he entered
Jerusalem that day were desperate.

"Save us, Please" they cried!

Save us from these Romans!

Restore the throne of David...*Please*"

On that day, riding a donkey and a colt, as Matthew tells the story,
Jesus knew he couldn't do what the people wanted him to do.

He knew he wasn't that kind of Messiah.

He knew why they waved the palms that day and

He knew that he did not come for a miraculous intervention into the politics
of his fellow Jews.

Jesus knew that his mission, was so much bigger than that.

He knew that his mission was a mission of the heart.

He knew that his mission wasn't just sweet words,
pie in the sky ideals and pious actions...

He knew that while his mission wasn't a political one,

he knew that it would have political implications and reverberations....

He knew that his mission was to show the

Very Real, Very Tangible Presence of the Reign of God...

where the hungry would be fed and the poor would be welcome.

He knew that his mission was to show the

Very Real, Very Tangible Presence of the Reign of the God

where compassion took precedence over Law.

Jesus knew that his mission was to show the

Very Real, Very Tangible Presence

of the Reign of God where the last would be first,

and the leaders were to be the servants to all..

He knew that in his Abba God's kingdom...

what most people understood as 'justice'....

always took a back seat to mercy.

**He understood that what he preached would absolutely
affect those in both political *and* religious power.**

**He knew that they would not like what he had to say
about their sense of privilege and the abuse of their power.**

**But Jesus also knew that what he preached would not only empower the poor
and the marginalized.. but it would also challenge them too.**

According to Rev. Omar Hamid Al-Rikabi

the palm branch during the time of Jesus

was a symbol of nationalism and military victory...

Those that waved the branches that day,
thought that finally Yahweh was going to rescue them.
Those that waved the branches that day,
wanted Jesus to take on the abusive powers kick them out of town.
They wanted the scoundrels punished....
They wanted the reign of the Great King David restored...
They wanted a taste of Power and perhaps, even some
pay back for all the hurt and the wrong that had been done to them....

But Jesus wasn't about to do that.

To many of those Jews who lined the streets with Palms waving high...Jesus'
understanding of Reign of God was a huge disappointment!
His role as Messiah was not to their expectations or their liking....

and that's why they left him to hang alone on the cross.

Today as we begin Holy Week, 2014

and it would be good to ask ourselves a few questions:

Do we ever, have we ever, expected God to save us, to rescue us
from whatever situation we don't like....just like the ancient Jews?

Are we expecting Divine Intervention into world affairs so that we might
avert another world war or ecological disaster?

Are we expecting Jesus, as the Messiah,
to do for us what we cannot seem to do for ourselves?

Are we expecting Jesus to SAVE us from the troubles and struggles of life?

Is that why we wave the palms today?

If we find ourselves answering yes to those questions,
if we were to learn from history.... we would do well to think again...

**But, if we find ourselves answering, “well, no, not really”
then there are few other questions we could ask ourselves this week...
Do I believe that the Kingdom of God really is here and now,
as Jesus taught?
Do I really believe that God abundantly, graciously loves me,
as Jesus taught?
Can I really believe that forgiving over and over again leads to a life filled
with freedom and joy, as Jesus taught?
Can I begin to act with Compassion towards all people, towards all beings
and thus see the radiance of Heaven all around, as Jesus taught?
Can I learn to trust and to believe more with my heart and less with my ego,
as Jesus taught us....**

**If I...If we... can even inch just a little closer
to saying ‘yes’ to *these* questions...
Then our palms can represent not a desperate cry for some distant deity
to come down and rescue us...
but they can represent our gratitude
for the life and mission of Jesus the Christ.
Then our palms could be a sign of our deep hope for the future built
upon Compassion, Forgiveness and Love.
Then our palms could represent the Truth of the Life of Jesus
and the very real, tangible presence of the Reign of God
in our hearts and on the Earth....**

**So, the question is, of course ...
What kind of Messiah am I expecting?
What kind of Savior am I welcoming?
Why do I wave my palms today? Amen!**