



**Palm Sunday 2017 (Year A)  
Homily**

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Archbishop of Perth**

St Mary's Cathedral, Perth  
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Those of you who come to our Cathedral regularly, may have often heard me say that while our faith as Catholics is very rich and can be understood in many different ways, in the end our faith, before it is anything else, is about our relationship with God as he has made himself known in Jesus. Our faith is about a person, whom we are invited to know, and love, and serve and with whom we hope to live forever in profound joy and peace. We seek to do this together, as brothers and sisters united by our faith, knowing that God has created us to live in communion with each other so that together we can live in communion with him.

For this reason, perhaps at this time of the year even more so than at any other time, we are invited to fix our eyes very firmly on Jesus. Today we celebrate the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. We know that it is also the entry of Jesus into the last week of his earthly life. Our reading of the passion today, which will be repeated on Good Friday when we will read the account of the passion from John's gospel, reminds us of this. We can expect to find that the things which are of greatest importance to Jesus will emerge in the accounts of these last days of his life.

As we contemplate Jesus as he takes this final journey we will also therefore be given a glimpse into the very depths of God. In the words and actions, the encounters and the struggles, the prayers and the silences of Jesus, the mystery of God will be unveiled for us and in discovering a little more deeply who God is we will discover too what we are being invited into.

Saint Paul offers us a way into the mystery of this week which lies ahead of us when he speaks of Jesus in his letter to the Philippians. Even though Jesus was divine, Saint Paul tells us, Jesus did not cling to his equality with God. Rather he emptied himself, he humbled himself, he made himself vulnerable, he surrendered himself into the hands of others, he gave absolutely everything he had so that others, so that we, might have life. In doing this Jesus has revealed to us the hidden mystery of the very nature of God himself. No wonder that in the letters of Saint John in the New Testament, the writer can simply say, "God is love". But Jesus is also fully human and in these last days of his life he also reveals to us what a human life lived to the full, in integrity, honesty, courage and fidelity, looks like. It looks like a life lived in love.

This is the double challenge of this Holy Week which begins today. As I keep my eyes fixed on Jesus this week, do I dare to believe that God is as Jesus reveals him to be? Can I accept a humble God, a self-emptying God, a vulnerable God, a God in other words of astounding and almost scandalous love? And if I can, have I the courage to accept that, made as I am in the image of God, this too is the pathway I have to take if I am to be true to myself and to the God who made me? In my own family life, in my career, in my social circles, in my neighbourhood and



in my Church community, what will this mean for me? What is it calling me to? What will need to change?

It will involve a death of course. A death to selfishness, a death to pride, a death to domination of others.

To accompany Jesus from his entry into Jerusalem to his last days on earth is to accompany him to Calvary. But as we remember each year as we celebrate Easter, Calvary itself also leads somewhere: it leads to the empty tomb, to the joy of the resurrection, and to the certainty that life is stronger than death and that love is stronger than hate. May our faith in the resurrection of Jesus strengthen each one of us to accept those deaths without which we cannot live our lives to the full. May we find the courage to walk in the footsteps of Jesus this week and enter into the joy of his resurrection next Sunday morning.