



# St John's Cathedral 聖公會聖約翰座堂

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Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong Island  
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

Message of Hope: Palm Sunday

5th April 2020

*The Revd Robert Martin CMP*

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Dear Emmanuel Brothers and Sisters,

Good morning everyone, welcome to Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week!

**Holy Week this year** is going to be very different from any we have known up to now, and I guess we will all feel it. As we mark the great events that give us new life in Christ, we will do so full of the concern, anxiety, fear and, maybe even, sadness caused by this viral Pandemic.

**In a very real way this year** we will join, not just in the suffering of Christ, but in the suffering of our brothers and sisters throughout the world. **Holy Week is traditionally a time for walking the Way of the Cross.** This is often done liturgically in church but this year, I fear, it will be more than just a service in a church – ***it will be lived out in our lives.*** We will all in some way have to personally walk the Way of the Cross. How we respond to taking up our cross will be a time of testing for our faith.

It's often said that as we follow Jesus through Holy Week we have a choice to make.

**We can choose to be a bystander**, one of the crowd, keeping a safe distance. Enthusiastically shouting, '*Hosanna*' on Palm Sunday and, even more enthusiastically shouting, '*Crucify him*' just a few days later!

Or **we can choose to be a follower** - like Mary and John at the Cross supporting Jesus, or like Veronica, who by tradition wipes the face of Jesus with her veil, or even like Simon of Cyrene, the foreigner, the despised stranger, who helps Jesus to carry his Cross.

**I'm always deeply moved** that amidst all the cruelty and barbarity of Holy Week, there are also these moments of heroic kindness, of tenderness and of compassion.

**I also find it encouraging at this same time**, that as we walk the path of this pandemic, we too can notice around us evidence, not just of selfishness, but of compassion and self sacrifice. May this time of testing prove to be a time of grace for us all.

**We need to hold on to the truth that for Christians,** remembering this last week of Jesus' life is above all an **ACT OF HOPE**. We retell the story each year **because Jesus is risen from the dead**. And this remembering has a real effect on us. For as we **do this in memory of him**, the same compassion, forgiveness and healing practiced by Jesus are proclaimed again to the whole world, and all because he is risen from the dead. **Our Christian story is not a dead remembering** - but a making effective in the present the saving events that gave us new life in Christ.

**Perhaps, the crucial questions for us this Holy Week are:** How will we follow Jesus? In what ways will we welcome him in our worship and in our homes?

**Yes, sometimes we will betray him as Judas did.** But will we also accompany him on his final journey to Jerusalem? Will we stay faithful with him or will we abandon him like many other people? Will we be a bystander or a follower?

This is the challenge of Holy Week. **This is our challenge!**