

PALM SUNDAY

April 9, 2017

WHERE DOES THE SOUND GO?

The majority of Lent is behind us. We have come through the forty days. We have experienced quiet, self-reflection and prayer. It has been a slower more subdued time. But we are here now in a different place.

Holy Week for me has a different pace and feel. My senses are heightened almost to the bursting point. In many ways it is a busy time – back then and again now. It has both raucous noise and deathly quiet. The crowds make themselves known in both joy and anger, the Jewish hierarchy have their say and the Romans have their part to play. Both the noise and the quiet speak to me – they force me to listen with more attention – to focus on what is and what is not said.

WHERE DOES THE SOUND GO? Can I hear it?

We begin with the exuberant crowds welcoming Jesus to Jerusalem with cries of Hosanna. In fact we sang them this morning as we re-created the heralding of Jesus into the city. We carried our palms and the music caught us up in the spirit. Feel the excitement of that day! I for one can imagine the atmosphere of that expectant arrival. EXPECTANT! That is the word of the day – the long-expected Messiah. The one who would free the Hebrews from their oppression.

Expectant! Expectations! Oh how these can get us into trouble. They can be hopes dashed and unfulfilled. They are about us and what we want – not necessarily what will happen or can happen. The expectations of Palm Sunday will come crashing down as the week progresses.

WHERE DOES THE SOUND GO? Is it still heard?

There will be rumblings in the background and things will start to unravel. Noise will once again dominate in the garden when Jesus is arrested – but we have not yet reached Thursday – a day when the noise starts again and the crowd is in control. These shouts are very different – not those of joy and expectation but of disappointment and anger – the sound of hopes dashed. Pilate plays his part and valiantly tries to avoid the crucifixion but he cannot withstand the crowd. When the Passion is re-enacted, I can hear the shouts of “crucify him” as clearly as I heard the hosannas. But I don’t feel them with the anger of the crowd but I feel with the pain of the outcome.

WHERE DID THE SOUND GO? Did it become silence?

At the cross there is no silence from the crowd. They are there for a public spectacle.

But then there is the silence of the tomb. The silence of mourning and disbelief is not a quiet reflective silence. Not the quiet we experienced through the time of Lent. It is a silence filled with fear.

That silence continues through Saturday. The fear and uncertainty is palpable.

WHERE DID THE SOUND GO? Did it become surprise?

Sunday brings surprises and disbelief. Death did not triumph. All is not lost. It is not the expected result or the end of fear - but in the surprises and confusion maybe a glimmer of hope can be found. What comes next cannot be imagined. While the previous week is not forgotten, it does not have the last word.

WHERE DID THE SOUND GO? Listen... and you will hear alleluia.