

When in the midst of suffering and surrounded by aches and pains, alienation and rejection, it is very easy to lose sight of hope. Suffering has the power to hold us deep down, and give us an illusion that light has no place in that moment of darkness.

Like this man I used to visit at a hospital. He had a terminal illness and was in deep pain constantly. I used to feel that I could make his life a little bit lighter or brighter by being present with him. Sometimes telling a few silly jokes, read the Bible, or pray with him. But nothing would cheer him up. I used to get frustrated. Because at the end of all of that, he would say, "You can say all of that, but I'm going to die anyway."

During one such visit, his wife was present. I remember his wife telling him, "Why don't you get up and get a shower and maybe shave? I'll take you down. We'll go for a coffee and some fresh air, maybe some sunlight." And I heard him say, "What's the point? I am going to die anyway. What is the point?"

Suffering has that dark power to pin us down. Jesus, as he was entering the city of Jerusalem, sparked a new hope to those people who were in the same mindset, what is the point? The Romans are too powerful, and we are too powerless. But by his triumphant entry, Jesus, at least for a few moments, gave them something to hope for. He entered the city triumphantly. He entered triumphantly.

That is a story of Palm Sunday. A story of a victorious entry. People shouting, "Hosanna to the King. Save us." It is also a story of betrayal, denial, persecution, unfair judgment, cruel treatment, and death.

The incredible journey of God made man determined to save us, that is the Palm Sunday journey of Jesus. The story of a god who gave up his son for the life of the world.

Today on this Palm Sunday, we journey with Christ who journeys with us all the while. This is not any ordinary journey. It's the journey of old life where we see that constant and abiding presence of Jesus in our lives. In our moments of darkness, doubt, loneliness, betrayal, loss, and grief.

More importantly, this is an opportunity, a forced one, that might help us define a deeper meaning of life rather than being buried in darkness and suffering. We have lost the social gatherings we so love, like our pubs and bars, sports clubs, cafes and restaurants, and all those places we love to gather with each other to enjoy each other's company and presence. And the closing down of our churches is a further alienation from each other.

Perhaps this gives us an opportunity to encounter God in a different way, to find each other in a different way, to find meaning. Maybe in our being by ourselves, we can encounter those deep and sometimes confronting questions on the meaning of life, our relationships, and the purpose of our lives.

When we are downcast and depressed, it is useful to remember and say to oneself, "This too will pass." Like the Melbourne weather, it rains and looks cold and miserable one moment, then out of nowhere, the sunshine. This too will pass.

Our health, emotions, relationships, and economic and social situation of our land and our world are all subject to this law of change. This situation, which is coronavirus pandemic, has put us all on one level, that we are all not immune. Not immune to this change. If we have the patience and the endurance to keep working creatively and doing the right things, supporting each other, and above all, holding on to God, this too will pass away.

So friends, I invite you to join this journey of Jesus. To open ourselves, to receive his message of hope, his message of new life, and his message of the resurrection. From being a people who said, "What is the point?" we then become a people who say, "Jesus is the point." Then with the crowd in Jerusalem,

we can shout together, "Hosanna to the King, the one who has come to save us." The saviour whose death has the power to lift us up from this moment of darkness. Hosanna to the King.